Letters to Isabel

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LORD SHAW
OF DUNFERMLINE

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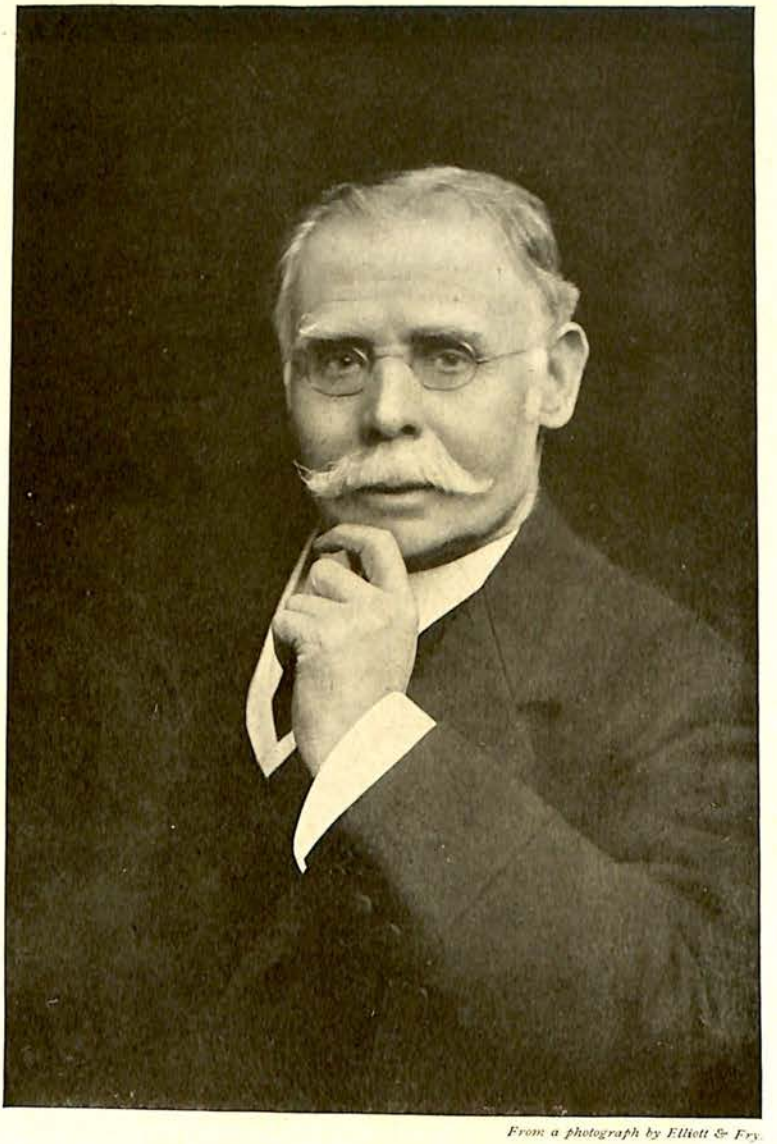
LETTERS TO ISABEL



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Thaws of Dunfermline

Letters to Isabel

By

Lord Shaw of Dunfermline

99505

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NOTE :—These letters were written at the places and on the dates they bear. Their order has had to be rearranged, so as to put them more into sequence with the events with which they deal.

I gratefully acknowledge the permission accorded to me by Lord Pentland to quote from the little bundle of letters written to me by Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman.

While I was searching about for a suitable print of the Parliament House of Edinburgh, my dear and distinguished colleague Lord Dunedin—who is an expert in so much, including photography—delightfully relieved the difficulty by taking, for me and for the book, the charming picture which recalls the scene of so many of our labours.

S. OF D.

CONTENTS

LETTER		PAGE
1.	THE PROMISE	1
2.	ROSYTH	5
3.	THE HIGH GLAZED BOOKCASE	8
4.	BOOKS FROM THE BOOKCASE	14
5.	SCHOOLS AND THE LAW	19
6.	BEFORE THE BALLOT	24
7.	TWO STEPS AT A TIME	30
8.	THE THREE ROADS. WHICH?	34
9.	THROUGH THE METROPOLITAN GATE	42
10.	MURDER? FORGERY? NEITHER	46
11.	TRACTS OF WILDERNESS	55
12.	WORSE THAN AN INFIDEL	65
13.	THROUGH THE 'EIGHTIES	71
14.	ENTER MR. GLADSTONE	77
15.	THE ELOQUENT IN TALK	83
16.	THE SARCASM CARVED IN STONE	92
17.	THE HARRY VANE POINT	97
18.	A SPORTING AFFAIR	104
19.	A FRONT-BENCH MAN WITH A BACK-BENCH MIND	110
20.	THISTLE AND SHAMROCK	117
21.	A POLITICAL LECTURE	127
22.	THE WIZARDS	136

LETTER		PAGE
23.	THE MILLIONAIRE	144
24.	THE LEARNED GHILLIE	151
25.	A DREAMER'S DREAM	155
26.	THE AUTHENTIC LETTER	160
27.	NIGHTMARE AND AWAKENING	166
28.	THE SACRED BATTLEFIELD	171
29.	STORM AND SUNSHINE	179
30.	BOTHA AND SMUTS	193
31.	"ABOVE THIS SCEPTRED SWAY"	204
32.	EDINBURGH AND FREEDOM	210
33.	FROM REPRISALS TO RECONCILIATION	219
34.	TEMPTATIONS IN THE WILDERNESS	227
35.	SIR HENRY CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN	234
36.	SNOWED UNDER	244
37.	THE STRANGE WILL	252
38.	THE MAKING OF A MINISTRY	258
39.	KEEPING STARS IN THEIR ORBIT	271
40.	TO THE GILDED CHAMBER	279
41.	THE IMPORTATION OF ARMS	284
42.	THE SWISH OF THE SCYTHE	290
43.	THE FIRST SINN FEIN REBELLION	293
44.	RIGHT TO WORK AND DUTY TO WORK	298
45.	"TRUTH AND JUSTICE THEN"	304
46.	LITERATURE AND THE LEAGUE	308
	INDEX	315

LIST OF PLATES

THE AUTHOR . . . . . *Frontispiece*

FACING PAGE

THE PARISH CHURCH AND ANCIENT ABBEY OF DUNFERMLINE 16

ISABEL 66

THE ROYAL PALACE OF DUNFERMLINE 144

PRINCIPAL RAINY 176

THE PARLIAMENT HOUSE OF EDINBURGH 208

SIR HENRY CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN 241

CRAIGMYLE 288

LETTERS TO ISABEL

LETTER I

THE PROMISE

Craigmyle.

August 8, 1919.

MY DEAR ISABEL,

I can write again!

Sitting in the loggia here, I look over great fair spaces of Scotland. Under an arc of crystal air the scene, serene and splendid, stretches out: horizoned by Mounts Battock and Keen, by Lochnagar, by Morven, and away west by far Ben Avon—seventy miles from point to point!

It outrivals the noble view which spread before the eyes of Marmion and his men when they surveyed, from the Braids, Edinburgh and the gleaming Firth, and north to the bounding line of the Ochils. Then it was that FitzEustace could not forbear and

> "Cried, 'Where's the coward who would not dare
> To fight for such a land!'"

But of those great things—daring, fighting, dying—there is no question here. For it is the land of the Gordons. Alas! to many homes, away out there, has come the Great Bereaving.

And so it is that it is not space nor beauty that most

impresses one. It is that all at last is peace. The Great War has closed.

In town, from day to day, one vividly realizes that, although peace—a glorious peace—has been won, yet deep problems have arisen, and suffering and peril remain, for our heroic people. From the highest political to the humblest domestic spheres we have still to reap the aftermath of war.

I received a letter a few days ago from General Smuts, saying good-bye, after his remarkable labours in England and Paris. He was, as you know, the representative of South Africa at the Peace Conference, and was appointed to that high position after his victorious African campaign. He puts the same thought about the after-war thus:—

"It will be a great change to go back to my small world, after having taken part in the greatest doings on earth. But I shall at any rate be very happy to rejoin my little family after an absence of three and a half years. What a time that has been! What 'crowded hours of glorious life.' But the aftermath is coming, and I fear we shall see grave troubles all over the world. I hope you have liked my few parting words to the British Public, calling them to patience and generosity in the difficult times ahead. Our worn-out nerves and temper are indeed going to be put to the severest test. I pray that God may not leave the poor, erring tribes of men to their own devices.

"Good-bye, my dear Friend. I send my dear love to you and Lady Shaw.

"Ever yours most sincerely,

"T. C. SMUTS."

You know what in our home circle we think of Smuts. He is—is he not?—the Christian warrior; a fine combination of courage and faith, of unquenchable valour, and yet of the just, the serene, and the equal mind.

Once, in a letter which I had from Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, and which I shall tell you of some day, he described to me what was higher as a political object than party or national triumph, or the overthrow of others, namely, to make—I think these were his words—"to make those love us who now hate us." And this—in the grant of a Constitution to South Africa—Sir Henry did. Both Botha and Smuts have talked to me recently about him with veneration and affection, in this sense.

But South Africa is another story. After a bit we shall come to it. Meantime, we are not doing things decently and in order, for we have not begun at the beginning.

I am rather at your mercy; you know how importunate you are that I should "tell you things," and then how you gravel me with: "Why don't you write that down?" And so I have grown submissive just because I am so browbeaten.

Autobiography? Catch me! Horrible word: horrible thing! To stand aloof from oneself, mere impossible acrobatics: to pretend that you are unconcerned as to whether you should appear a pleasing object?—mere useless affectation.

So what to do? Just this: to let you see places, events and men just as I happen to remember them; and if I stumble across the picture with any of the struggles and the happinesses of my own life, I shall be there because you have dragged me in.

I know that you want something about the early days. Calm yourself, my dear; perhaps you may hear from me to-morrow.

Meantime, as I say, it is the peace of everything here which sinks into the soul. Away south, railway strikes, bread strikes, coal strikes, with a haunting dread of social upheaval. Here, the fields of ripening grain and the everlasting hills.

Your grateful

FATHER.

LETTER II

ROSYTH

Craigmyle.

August 9, 1919.

MY DEAR,

Of all the changes in the appearance of places that I can think of, you will be surprised to hear me name Rosyth; I think Rosyth shows the greatest. It is tacked on to Dunfermline—with which it has about as much affinity as modern brass-work has to old tapestry: it is born of the spirit of war and the needs of war, and this in a place which was the very backwater of peace.

The clang-clang of industry—at high pressure for the mastery of the seas—resounds on a shore where in the 'Fifties you would see a belt of shingly beach with here and there a broken bottle or an old boot which the shifting of the tide had floated along from Limekilns—their natural emporium. And you might see, stepping westwards to the Castle of Rosyth, a couple of slow-paced, heavily built men, who addressed each other as "Captain," and in a floating odour of black twist spoke affectionately of a sloop or a brig which bore a wife's or a daughter's name, and which went out across the North Sea and through the Cattegat to Riga.

Yet their talk, too, was of change; mostly, however, of decay—the decay of Limekilns and Charlestown, and even Inverkeithing.

Such pictures could not but remain—etched into the memory of even the most restless of boys; and the scenes of to-day sometimes appear to fade away, and in their place, as on a palimpsest from which the latest writing was thought to have been quite erased, there appears the earlier and the primitive record—imprinted, overlaid, but ineffaceable.

There, for instance, are huge docks and quays, and there float battleships, cruisers, destroyers—the wonder of the age and the terror of the world. But all these pass away, and on the self-same spot I see a little horseshoe of stone, the prongs projected well into the salt water, where children, adventurously wandering from Dunfermline, were wont to bathe, without guardians and without fear.

One "grown-up" I remember well, a solicitor (*Scoticé*, a "writer"), named Blair—one of the kindliest humour, and most oracular of speech. Later, I used to hear of his not infrequent reply to the not infrequent question: "Well, Mr. Blair, how's business?" To this came, with a sidelong cock of the head: "Business, Sir! In the language of Thomas de Quincey, business is suffering from syncope, or solemn pause!" This good man came for his daily bathe to the "Basin of Rosyth." And so the vision of the bustling present, with its majestic panoply of naval power—all this fades out; and in its place I see the tall and sinewy form of Thomas Blair, the writer, poised on a slab of rock, ere he plunged into the grey-green waters of the Firth.

This, dear—would you believe it?—was more than sixty years ago. There was then, as it were, an interlude of peace: the Crimean War was over in 1856; the follow-

ing was the year of the Indian Mutiny: and so when I was six and seven—your respected father, if you care to know it, was born in 1850—there came new place-names into even the vocabulary of the child. The one, reverberating through the world, was Sebastopol: the other Lucknow; and these I distinctly remember as the gates which opened on new avenues to wonder; and War, and even Empire, gave an ampler range to the talk of the fireside.

And so far as the old world was concerned, the next nine years—that is, from the Mutiny to Sadowa—from the shock and terror of India to the sudden outbreak of Prussian military ambition, bursting like a new fear upon Europe—those nine years were the years of my conscious school life.

You would like to hear about that fireside talk and that school life, would you? Well, I am not sure. We shall see about it. Good night!

Your very own

True Love.

LETTER III

THE HIGH GLAZED BOOKCASE

Craigmyle.

September 19, 1920.

DEAR INFANTA ISABELLA,

How dim the memory grows about the early years! And how capricious it is!

No room in this world—no, not in king's palace or nobleman's castle, or anything down to the humblest sheiling on the hillside—can stamp its picture into my mind so deeply as the little reading-parlour with the high glazed bookcase and the great leathern arm-chair in which of an evening she sat.

So brave and practical she was! You may see her lineaments in the last chapter of Proverbs. Yes, my mother (and yours too, dear, but you must not let her see this letter!)—they both earned that priceless encomium: "In her tongue is the law of kindness." Yet she was austere, and with a high authority. Sometimes she was bemused; and when asked the reason, would reply, "Did I look bethochted?" and smile.

Dimly I understood that she was seeing again the procession of her sorrows. And what sorrows they were! My father's death, just as he was making his standing sure; then the eldest of a family of six, a lovely dark-ringleted girl, in her twentieth year, her mother's beloved counsellor, fading away like a flower, as if

Death itself was afraid to snatch suddenly; then the infant girl, born on the day of my father's death, and named after him, Alexandrina—she, too, torn from her arms. I remember the doctor coming; and after his verdict—ah! how I remember it!—never in my life did I hear anything more pitiful than her heart-broken cry.

Yet the dark clouds lifted, scattered by the stirrings of necessity, and by a second cause, on which I dare hardly speak: she kept up her communications with the Unseen. Reverence was deep in her nature; and reverence is the queen of the virtues. Lest reverence should degenerate into superstition, lest sorrow should lapse into fetish-worship, her broad downright sense, and—I say it quite sincerely—her quick sense of humour, were always at hand, and life's balance swung evenly, and by and by merrily, again.

Twenty years after—that is to say, forty years ago and long before you were born—there was a considerable outburst of agnosticism in Britain. I do not mean the shallow agnosticism of the prig—which, of course, is always with us—but real agnosticism, sprung from honest doubts and real intellectual dilemmas.

In the early days of which I speak there were distinct premonitions of it. The fear of it appeared like a spectre to the great and weary brain of Hugh Miller, and he blew out his brains in a house in Leith Walk. My father had studied his writings: among the books on our shelves I distinctly remember "The Testimony of the Rocks" and "My Schools and Schoolmasters," and I recall discussions on his views. But it was mostly the practical answer that appealed to the Scotch mind: and

in due time many a Scotch response reverberated in unison with Tennyson's—

> "Leave thou thy sister where she prays:
> Her early faith, her happy views;
> Nor thou with shadowed hint confuse
> A life that leads melodious lays.
>
> Her faith through form is pure as thine;
> Her hands are quicker unto good."

There was she, in whose veritable presence we saw—

> "The flesh and blood
> To which she links a truth divine."

And so was given in our humble circle, as in so many others, the perennial answer—the answer of life to doubt.

Now then, back to the reading-parlour. "Tom," she used to say, "I like to hear clever men talk." I used to sit on a footstool at her feet; and this she repeated to me when they went away and the little parliaments ended. Weighty problems were handled—but let me first tell you of the books.

Wodrow's History: little or no impression; the superstition against which Buckle so declaims in his "History of Civilization" was fleeting enough.

"The Scots Worthies"—a different affair. It caught hold, and there were passages in James Guthrie's dying speech and several others which mixed in my mind—not a bad mixture—the principles of civil liberty and religious liberty.

"The Pilgrim's Progress." There was a book for you! A picture of Apollyon—flames from the mouth, hoofs for feet, and "the scaly horror of his tail"; oh! the early rapture of really seeing the devil incarnate! Then the text: over and over again I read it till all was

familiar, till great stretches of the noblest poetical passages of Scripture passed into the mind, and a gallery of indelible sketches was made—the Wicket Gate and the Slough of Despond, the Valley of Humiliation, the Delectable Mountains and the Land of Beulah. And character-sketches: unforgettable: Greatheart; the Man with the Muck Rake, and those immortal psychological thumb-nail studies—the Judge and Jury in "Vanity Fair." What wonder was it that when your and my dear Dick gave up his life at Thiepval, and the Church authorities wanted a scroll for his memorial tablet, there should at once spring into my mind the éloge of Bunyan on the away-going of Mr. Valiant for the Truth, "And so he passed over, and all the trumpets sounded for him on the other side."

Have I lingered too long over what one might call these religious reminiscences? Well, dear, they were a type. In thousands and thousands of Scotch homes, I feel assured that this was so. It largely accounted for some of the traits—quaint, if you will—and some of the forces and currents, quiet and still, but yet strong, and, when opposed, tumultuous—of that Scotch character that has modified many nations and ruled great spaces of the earth. Jolly old Scots we are, to whom Providence in a well-known sense has been good, has it not?

Good night! Sound sleep!

Your loving

FATHER.

P.S.—Very well, my lass: I *will*. You have given me back the letter and asked me to bring in something about these big theological fellows—"Did they have the

same kind of upbringing or early impressions?" Here you are.

Well, I incline to the opinion that they had. The very same kind of early training that I have sketched was theirs. But in their case, of course, the soil was far richer. And they had a far wider and far deeper University culture. Natures such as theirs that were shocked into self-consciousness by Hugh Miller's death, and were bored and stung by the later extremes of Hegelian thought—these natures became a breed of intellectual giants.

They declined to bow the knee to Germany; they remorselessly pursued to its recesses every avenue of German thought, and they became the theological princes of the Free Church of Scotland, to whom by and by every Church and University in Christendom did homage. Some of them, such as Bruce, Marcus Dods and Robertson Smith, I hardly knew. Others I knew well, such as Drs. Davidson, Orr and Lindsay, and Principal Rainy; and one—the last of the band still with us—our friend and my fellow-student, Principal Sir G. Adam Smith. In these—one and all—I found the same traits: a penetrating judgment; a scholarship far beyond my limited reach; a power of what I may call expository and illuminative controversy. And their gifts were rested upon a depth of conviction and were graced with that reverence of which I have spoken and which only simple early training can instil.

Now, lest you grow too solemn, listen to this: Was I in these very early years "mighty in the Scriptures"? There seems to have been something of the sort. There was a Mr. George Sampson, a grocer of my acquaintance, for he was a donor of walnuts. It is a far back recollec-

tion, but it is very clear. I had to get my Scripture puzzles settled, so I went personally, and on my own, into the affair. I remember yet the tinkling of the front door bell as I pushed into his shop. The customers seemed to make way for me as I advanced. I was not so high as his counter, but I put my hand up to it, interrupting his business with the demand: "Mr. Sampson," said I, "are you the gentleman that carried away the gates of Gaza on his back?"

Your own,

S. or D.

LETTER IV

BOOKS FROM THE BOOKCASE

Craigmyle.

September 22, 1919.

MY DEAR,

Books, good books, and plenty of them: lucky lass that you are! This is what you have been brought up among. Glad am I that in your day nearly all kinds of literature, and certainly the good kind and the great kind, are not only accessible, but actually obtainable as a possession, for every well-doing household in the land.

Formerly it was so very different, that it will soon become impossible to realize the striking change in this respect between the end and the middle of the nineteenth century. *Then,* books were bought with self-denial. Shall it be—with literature—lightly come and lightly go? Preferring quantity to quality, and skimming to study, people are, I dare say, staggering about a bit. But cheer up!—things will right themselves; in literature as in life, the only thing that wears is quality—character.

Anyhow, a book *then* was something individual, a possession, to be weighed up, to be purchased with consideration, to be perused with gravity, to be kept with care. To stock a few shelves, then, cost as much as to furnish a quite excellent library to-day. As for variety

of interest—I speak comparatively—there was little of it. Novel reading—even novel reading on the Sabbath Day—slid modestly into the ordinary Scottish homes by the artful wicket-gates of *Good Words* and the *Sunday at Home*. Dr. Norman McLeod and Dr. Guthrie had much to answer for! But in the early days of which I speak the hour and the power of these "daring innovators" had hardly, I think, arrived!

No. We worked upon the solid. The literature of knowledge—so much has science advanced—was slender; but the real literature of power, especially the poets, that *did* get a grip.

Imagine, for instance, a rather undersized boy sitting in the great leathern chair and resting on one of its arms a large one-volume edition of Shakespeare's Plays, with Samuel Johnson's essay prefixed, and you may hear him draw his breath hard: he is on his first big excursion among the immortals, and he is panting with excitement over the closing scenes of "Othello." I remember it as if it were yesterday.

And there was a Burns—a genteel and very proper edition—but with plenty in it to fire the blood and to move the heart, and to show what human language can rise to in the passionate exaltation of the love-songs. These last, being wedded to familiar national music, became easily—it was the common case—a lifelong possession.

The non-religious prose I cannot well recall, though there were reams of it, and books like Mungo Park's "Travels," in two great volumes, I read from cover to cover. But few made any imprint on the memory. Some did. At one end of that scale there was, say, the homespun

humour of "Mamsie Waugh," and at the other end the thrilling episodes of "Uncle Tom's Cabin." Legree was for me the American Apollyon.

When you talk of books, don't forget the effects of books like that last. Owing to it, I make free to say, more than to any other cause, the sympathies of British homes were enthusiastically won for the victory of Lincoln and the North, and for the emancipation of the slave. We had, you know, done our bit in our own dominions; but we had done it in our compromising British way and bought the owners out. But here was a conflict not to be bought off, and, so far as Scotland was concerned, it was founded on principles of independence, of freedom, of brotherhood, which our history and our Burns had made dear to us and worth a fight.

In the talk in which these well-instructed, thoughtful men indulged, and which I was privileged to hear, these last ideas often recurred. But it went wide of my reach when they discussed, apparently with shrewdness, Adam Smith's "Wealth of Nations" and George Combe's "Constitution of Man."

While that was the kind of atmosphere (the Bible, Bunyan, Shakespeare, Burns)—the atmosphere in which Scotch boys of my time and rank lived, do not, please do not, put us down either for pundits or for prigs. On the contrary, it was a wildish, rollicking, spirited time for little fellows. And there were the materials for what is a great asset in a boy's life, not mystery exactly, but what I call historical wonder. I made friends with the clock-maker and accompanied him or his son up the tortuous stairs of the old Abbey Tower and into the reverberating chamber of that great bell whose deep and resonant curfew

THE PARISH CHURCH AND ANCIENT ABBEY OF DUNFERMLINE.

From an engraving by H. Griffiths, after a drawing by T. Allom.

booms—wherever one may wander, from childhood to age—booms in the memory for ever. Then climbing higher I reached the frieze of the Bartizan, and peering over the frieze, I saw far down below, the wood and classic glen of Pittencrieff. These enclosed romantic ruins—the tower and tomb of Malcolm Canmore, and that pile, which I knew to have been, long ago, the birthplace and the dwelling-place of Kings.

Only the other day I verified some facts about this, one of which facts, if your ladyship were English, I should swear you didn't know, namely, that it was there that King Charles I of England was born.

The story I give and the picture I send are from the standard history of Dunfermline, by that industrious and capable parish minister, Dr. Peter Chalmers. Puzzle: pick out the window of the room where the Martyr King first saw the light.

The plodding record reads:—

"*PALACE.*—A little to the south-east of King Malcolm Canmore's Tower, and east side of the rivulet close to the verge of the glen, in a very romantic situation, are the ruins of a palace, once the residence of the Sovereigns of Scotland. . . . At the western end tradition still points out a high window, now completely covered with ivy, and the chimney, nearly entire, of the room in which that ill-advised and unfortunate monarch, Charles I, was born, which event occurred on the 19th November, 1600. This, too, was the birthplace of his sister Elizabeth, on the 19th August, 1596, afterwards Queen of Bohemia, from whom her present Majesty [Queen Victoria] is descended."

In those days no dull definiteness like that weighed me down, but all around there was impressionism and romance. When my guide called to me from the bell tower, I tumbled or clambered down the worn and dusty steps—beyond my power of numbering—and I was away, scampering over graves, to an abutment of the churchyard to climb and to bestride a cannon from Sebastopol, and strain my eyes across the Firth and away to the south-east, to catch a glimpse of Edinburgh Castle.

But the rollicking took far less classic turns than that. Think, for instance, of the snow. How it descended on the cold, grey, slushy, slippery town, and re-inspirited us by its supply of ammunition! From an entry, as from a fortification, a bombardment took place. Dunfermline in those days was a labyrinth of closes, the strategic possibilities of which I had studied with care. The citizen who gave chase came to grief or got lost; but by that time I was sitting at my mother's knee safe in the reading-parlour and "hearing clever men talk."

Her, so long as there was nothing really bad in it, I took for an ally. I once heard her spirited rejoinder to a friend, who offered her sympathy about a boy who got into scrapes and out again so often: "Rather," said my mother, "rather a coal than a clod."

Ever your affectionate

PARENT.

LETTER V

SCHOOLS AND THE LAW

Craigmyle.

August 15, 1919.

ISABEL DEAR,

Here is a memory which after sixty-four years remains ineffaceable. It is a school scene; and if you can see its connexion with education, you are the clever one.

Education was a passion with my father and mother. He died, alas! when I was in my sixth year, and I remember that he was alive when this occurred. I had to be at school at the fixed hour of nine in the morning. I must frankly tell you that, like all the rules of my youth (they were certainly good rules), breach meant punishment. There was an unerring precision about that, which left me no doubts about the reign of law! To fend off the consequences by either untruth or concealment or evasion: somehow that did not come within one's range; perhaps the consequences of exposure would have been too awful. So nothing was left for me but to try to drive a bargain.

Armed, accordingly, with an apple, I faced the foe. I remember yet climbing the school stair and entering the upper room.

"Mr. Gellet," said I, "I'm ower late; but if you don't *give me* the tawse, then I'll *give you* that big, bonny, red-cheeked apple!"

"All right, Tom," said he—as I thought very solemnly—and he accepted the apple and placed it on his desk.

The thing would have faded from my mind but for this—to me—extraordinary circumstance, that he broke his bargain. At the end of the school hours he gave me my apple back! When the worthy teacher called in the evening, I heard splutterings of laughter in the home circle, which mystified rather than mortified me.

After this Infant School—for I had been sent to school at three, I was so restless—came the High School of Dunfermline.

The time I speak of was, of course, long before the passing of the famous Scotch Education Act of 1872, which set up School Boards in every burgh and parish in the Kingdom. In one sense this was a mere matter of administration, namely, as I have said, the setting up of an elected Board; for in every burgh and parish there had already and for long been a schoolhouse and school teacher, and the ideals of Knox had never failed. This is literally so, and among their results is an outstanding fact: the passion for education was the ideal, and the uses of it for the main chance in life was the practical side of the affair to the Scotch mind.

My mother—shrewdness itself—used to say to me:

"It's but little of this world's gear that you'll get from me, but I would like to give you the best education that that head of yours will hold."

So I went to the High School of the town, which had a headmaster who received a house, £100 a year—an old burgh foundation—and our school fees, as his reward. He was of diminutive stature, but of more than average intelligence, and faithful to his task. More by my

mother's influence than his, and possibly from a spirit of emulation, I plodded through an elementary course. The schoolbooks were bald and uninteresting; in nothing educational has there been more advance than in this vital matter, the production of good schoolbooks.

There came in time, on top of the three Rs, a sound course of Euclid—taken in the raw—with some Algebra thrown in, and a smattering of Latin (grounding, grounding, grounding, in Ruddiman's Rudiments), less French and no Greek. Thus poorly equipped, I stood my examination, and remember, in a kind of dazed way—I was just over thirteen—getting the Town Council medal—a fat bit of silver with a broad blue ribbon—hung round my neck by the Provost of the day, with a kindly word. Then I rebelled: I declined to go back to school because it would be mean to compete again for the Dux place. What was to be done?

Thus there arose the first educational puzzle which I really took stock of as a thing to be solved, if I could, in later days—the puzzle of the educational ladder. There was no real secondary school within our ken short of Edinburgh—and Edinburgh was distant three hours by coach or rail; for nobody, so far as I know, had then even dreamed of bridging the Forth. Dollar had a good school, called an Academy, but there was no connexion with it by train. Either Edinburgh or Dollar meant that I had to be boarded and lodged away from home, with the educational fees and expenses on top. The latter my mother might have stood, but the former was not to her liking—she would not part with her boy.

For the same reason, and also because she was too independent in her views, she refused the offer of a friend

in Banbury to adopt me and send me, after some more schooling, to Oxford University. Did I want to go to sea? There was an Inverkeithing captain offering to take me on, and under his own friendly eye, to his own Baltic and coasting boat. No; it was of no use; she would not part with her boy.

It turned out that all the time she had had her own ideas. I had none. I had no preferences for any particular line of life—none whatsoever. So she chose, and she chose the law! These vacations—of trampings to the sea, and trampings to the trout burns in the Ochil Hills—these vacations were too long; so I was taken into counsel: we used to discuss things together till early morning hours.

"I think, Tom," said she, "that you should turn your attention to the law."

"What's the law?" said I.

"Oh," she says, with a twinkle in her eyes, "somebody asks your opinion and you tell him: and then you send in your account and say: 'The charge for this is five shillings.'"

So no educational ladder for me. I could only grope back to it a few years after. I should tell you, dear, that I had tried to get into a bank, but, thanks be to a wise Providence, I had failed. I was too small of stature! How could the British Linen Company be served by a dwarf? A school companion was chosen, a fine, quiet fellow, six feet high. He remained there in the same room of the same bank, and probably at the same desk, for forty years, and then he died, his maximum salary probably never over £100.

So behold your paternal relative on a high stool in the

office of a high-minded, but high-tempered, solicitor! I simply had to grow up. And grow I did, like the sturdiest of saplings. We banked at the British Linen, the office that refused me, and I remember well the agent taking a squint at me as I went in from time to time; it seemed to me that it was rather insulting to him that I should be growing at the rate of about an inch a fortnight!

Good-bye, then, educational ladder; good-bye for the present.

"But, Father," I hear you say, "what about the hearth and home talk that you sometimes speak of?"

Well, my dear, one thing at a time. That is another story.

Ever your loving

FATHER.

LETTER VI

BEFORE THE BALLOT

Craigmyle.

September 30, 1919.

MY DEAR ISABEL,

The entire railway traffic of the country is under the arrest of a strike. It carries my mind back to the conditions and hours of labour half a century ago.

As a boy I stood watching one of the early processions of miners, gathered to hear a leader of that day named McDonald. It was not what was said, but what I saw, which was stamped upon my mind.

The men were nearly all under middle age, and the revolting fact was this: that, as it appeared to me, at least one in three of these men bore, in his own person —in gait, in figure, or in face—the traces of bodily injury. Now it was the "hirpling" walk caused by a fractured limb imperfectly repaired; again it was that twisted and high-shouldered formation of the body which comes of extreme labour in a thin seam when the workman plies his pick horizontally. And over and over again "the human face divine" had been gashed open and was seared by a deep blue scar.

People raged against the wild things that were said at these meetings; savage demands, if you will, but for better and more human conditions of life. I forgot these, but the pictures remained. And many, many times when

Statutes of Parliament like "Mines Regulations Acts" have been proposed, or under interpretation, I seem to have seen again, away beyond the green benches of the Commons or the red benches of the Lords, that dolorous *tableau vivant*—the men maimed in form and marred in visage, in whose cases sacrifice and suffering seemed Labour's inevitable portion.

Forgive me, dear, bringing this before you. But when you hear round condemnations of men like the miner, remember the past. It was as I have described it. Notable changes, enormous ameliorations, have taken place, for which one is filled with a great thankfulness. But the memory of men is tenacious, and the bitterness of to-day's controversies may be in part owing to recollections of acute and undeserved miseries. You are old enough to reckon these things up for yourself; but, when you do so, give play to the historical sense—it teaches us to make allowances.

As to *hours* of labour—ha! The fact is that we are living in a different world. It seems odd to make a lawyer's clerk's hours a general measure, but I do believe that it is good enough at that. From 9.30 to 8, and on Saturdays till 1; short intervals for meals; roughly speaking, a fifty-five hours week. But overtime! There was the rub. Just before the curfew sounded I was often summoned up and the evening's extra work began. This lasted variously till 9 or 10, or, in extreme cases, till 2 and even 3 in the morning. And no pay. Reward—that I was learning my business.

Was this slavery? Not at all—not at all. The reason for which is that during the years when the work was the most severe I was under a master whom I respected and

revered; and as his amanuensis I saw the workings of an alert, a highly principled, and a well-cultured mind. It is the old story: "The labour we delight in physics pain."

To show you, however, what we should now call the drudgery side of it, consider this. It is quite remarkable —the changes in such an apparently little matter as the expression and transmission of thought. This applies to the mechanism of every office in the kingdom. Letters or documents are dictated and the author is a free man for other work. His words are stenographed, typed, booked by press; the mechanics of the operation are accurate and swift. *Then* we wrote to dictation in long-hand, and *we booked the letters also in long-hand*—witness the great fat letter-books, those cruel devourers of time. When press-copying was introduced it was an innovation, a labour-saving apparatus, and wiseacres—not knaves nor fools, but simply wiseacres—shook their heads. Laughable.

Could the spirit of exhilaration or of fun enter into such a life? Yet it did. Think of the roaring time at elections—the concocting of political squibs, the fine rampagiousness of manœuvring or disturbing a political meeting. I remember well, in the years 1866-7, we were agents for Mr. Ramsay, an estimable Whig. The opponent was a spruce, well-groomed Radical out of a Tory nest, by name Mr. Henry Campbell, afterwards Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman. The nerve of every man and boy in the establishment was strained for his undoing.

I broke hours. It was a duty, for had I not to clamber into the front seat of the gallery of the Music Hall and represent public opinion? A Mr. Thomas Morrison, a shoemaker, orator and ex-Chartist (uncle, by the way, of Mr. Andrew Carnegie, the millionaire), held forth after Mr. Campbell had spoken. He made an astonishing prognostication, which was rapturously received by the Campbellites, but was greeted with a pandemonium of derision by the Ramsayites, a derision in which my vocal powers nearly brought me into notice from the Chair. The prognostication was that the candidate would one day be Prime Minister of England! A good laugh Sir Henry had when I told him the story five-and-thirty years afterwards, at 10, Downing Street. I think you have heard him chaffing me about it yourself.

By the way, there was a curious circumstance there. We beat Mr. Campbell. He, however, saw that a wider electorate was on the eve of enfranchisement, and he held on. The Reform Act of 1867 was passed; and he then beat us. And he retained the seat for the remainder of his life—forty years.

Of course, until the Ballot Act was passed the chances of not a little "enjoyment" remained. In the county we acted for Sir Robert Anstruther, and he had a body of notably keen supporters. Let me give you an instance of what went on. In the polling booth the Sheriff was presiding officer, and on either side of him was seated a representative of each candidate, whose duty was to mark off each vote from the list before him, and to pass out the results to a committee outside. I was Sir Robert's representative and witnessed the scene.

One of the "incidents," you see, which the free and

independent elector had to face was that within a few minutes of his having done his duty to his country it was known not only that he had voted, but how he had voted, and he was greeted or treated accordingly, and on the spot. There were happenings afterwards also—but that is another matter.

So the door was suddenly opened, and from the hubbub outside there was thrust—visibly shoved—into the room Laird So-and-so, a quite notorious drunkard. He had been primed in every way, but principally on the name of the candidate; that name was the compend and the stamp of everything in Church and State that had to be voted for. In fact, so well had it been dinned into him, and so often had he repeated it, that he could not say anything else.

He accordingly balanced himself carefully, reached the desk, and to the Sheriff's courteous inquiry, "What is your name?" he made the prompt and astonishing answer, "Sir Robert Anstruther."

"I am not wanting the name of a candidate," said the Sheriff, "but your own name. What is your name, please?"

The Laird balanced himself with dignity and eyed the Sheriff up and down, evidently wondering what game he was up to. Nothing else but the candidate's name was in the programme. And so, to the question again repeated:

"What is your name, sir?" he again replied with determination:

"Sir Robert Anstruther."

His political convictions were not to be shaken. He was removed by the police. In a couple of hours he was

back, but he had been better drilled. He gave his name and voted straight, and was received outside with cheers. Things are duller now. The ballot came, and the drunkard lost his double chance.

Jolly old British Constitution!

Yours ever and aye,

S. OF D.

LETTER VII

TWO STEPS AT A TIME

Craigmyle.

October 10, 1919.

MY DEAR TRUANT,

I sometimes really do think about you and remember my promise. But on these glorious days the partridges —have they not?—have the first claim.

Anything more about the lawyer's apprentice? Not a word more. It would bore you. I have no memory for stodge. Stodge, however, is the anvil of application. And the habit of application, again, is the making of mental muscle. The strain upon my slender equipment of *that* was coming.

After a year or two I came to see that the walls of a solicitor's office were too narrow for the kind of life I wished to live. The rebel in me broke loose, and I thought of the Bar.

Why then not go, and go at once? Halt a bit. To the Bar was a very adventurous jump. The solicitor's life was narrow, but it was a living; the barrister's life might be no living at all, and I might have to drop back into being a solicitor after all. I could not afford to have any nonsense in my head about carrying all before me. So then, in order to be a solicitor, I had to complete my indenture. Complete it, therefore, I did, thus leaving that avenue open if the other speculation should fail.

But if I went to the Bar, I must at least try to go on even terms—have degrees both in Arts and in Law, and be "respected like the lave." Alas! the blessed educational ladder! I had lost hold of it for four years; hence I must mount two steps at a time, and take the two curricula together—compress seven years' work into four. This was done; but I was a galley-slave.

Of the true aroma of University life I was never, until the last year of it, fully sensible, and no real justice could be done to either course. Yet on the one hand I may have been fortified in habits of endurance already formed, while on the other it may have tightened up a certain tenacity of purpose. Endurance and tenacity. Scotland demands these of her sons.

As bearing upon them, here is a curious circumstance. You have heard many discussions about the advantages of compulsory Greek. Well, Greek *was* compulsory in those days; no degree without it. So here was a youth of 19 or 20 who had no Greek—not a word, not a letter of it. What was to be done? Only one thing. I left the office in July; on the 1st of August I bought a Greek grammar, and within three months I had matriculated (make no mistake, there was no examination for that privilege then!), and I was in the Greek classes.

There I was, sitting on the University benches, listening with amazement to the prelections of Professor Blackie—on everything in general, with a preference for Scotch, and a little Greek by the way. Dear, nimble-witted, lovable man! And at the appointed eighteen months afterwards I "scraped through" my classics for the degree.

A perfect travesty of education; a cast-iron system.

Had there been the alternative of a modern language, I might have been making use of that all my life, instead of laying to one side and for ever that glorious dead language which I had never got the length of loving for its own sake.

Yet we had had Blackie: and Blackie—the alert, the handsome professor, with the noble head of snowy hair—was an exhilaration. Often, too, he had the comforting word and he drew us out. Once I was encouraged by him when he looked over a rendering in English verse of one of Æschylus's choruses which I ventured to submit to him. He had a real turn for versification, but his talent for it went to seed. For instance, this: Imagine 150 young men watching his gesticulations as he shouted:

> "There, there, there, there, there, there, *there!*
> God bless Tom and his whalebone wig!"

So much for compulsory Greek.

With Latin one did—as why not under a scholar like Sellar?—one did get a little farther. Yet the stage of *real facility in the use of the language* was never reached; and my impression is that this was the case with the overwhelming majority of students who left the Scotch Universities during that generation. How is it in your day?

* * * * *

On the literature of it, especially on the Augustan poets, Sellar was really inspiring. The memory retains, curiously, only three outstanding points, two of style and one of content. Carlyle was then in great vogue among us; but in Tacitus I seemed to see a trenchant, vivid and compendious strength beside which Carlyle, with no mean grip of these qualities, appeared almost vaporous. At

the other end of the scale, it was the delicate grace of Cicero's letters to Atticus that came like a far-away yet effective rebuke to that rawness and abruptness which are the curse of Scottish youth.

Then the third had content in it as well as style; it was Cicero's "*pro Cluentio*." The merits of the case are no matter; but many a time and oft in the course of a legal and parliamentary life I have remembered how a great solid portion of the famous address was dedicated to the removal from the jurors' minds of "*invidia*." *Invidia*—prejudice for or prejudice against—*invidia*—never forget this, dear—*invidia* is the foe of fair judgment. It has sent the innocent often and often to the gallows or the stake; and, from the great scale of former days to the petty scale of milder times, it has dealt out ostracism and martyrdom with a callous mind. Within the circle of the law it is still to be found. Human nature is so constituted that in quarters of the brain both of judge and of jury its embers may lie ready for the stirring; but the art of advocacy is never higher than when the herculean task is undertaken in a cause debauched by public innuendo to remove prejudice from the mind of a jury or from the mind of a judge, over whom, much more than over a jury, "invidia" has a strong and a subtle hold. I have often thought about this, and I speak from a long experience.

But I weary you. Only remember—beware of *invidia*. It is, as I say, the foe of fair judgment. Well, Cicero, in his "*pro Cluentio*," was the first to teach me this lesson.

Have I talked like a professor? I hope not, truly.

Your very own

TRUE LOVE.

LETTER VIII

THE THREE ROADS. WHICH?

Craigmyle.

October 14, 1919.

MY DEARLY BELOVED LASS,

We were to motor all the way to the great Babylon, and were proposing to start this morning. But all our plans are upset. So what to do? Whip up another recollection or two of the student days, and write you another letter? So be it.

Of all the professors, Masson was the prince. The mark of everything he did was conscientious thoroughness. He had no antipathy to modernity of style, for he had the feeling of movement which comes from the historical sense and the open mind. Mostly he plodded, and you could not but respect his sureness of foot. But when he soared, as he sometimes did, it was no mere flutter, but like the lift of a great aeroplane, where everything awes you, even the pulsing of the engines. When he reached the Elizabethans the large class-room filled up and up; and his three lectures on Shakespeare drew his former pupils back to mingle with their successors on the crowded benches, and to quaff once again the old inspiration. It quite maddened me to realize that I was only able to give to Masson the mere scraps of my time.

But I remembered and I practised one of his rules. That rule has, I feel convinced, enriched many

a life. It was something like this: "When anything strikes you in a great poet, mark the passage down and learn it if you can by heart. If you do that it will go with you to the end of the world. It will become part of yourself. That is culture." In my own case, as in the case of a whole generation, this grave and simple and by no means recondite lesson has been a veritable well-spring of joy.

I must pull up. The four years drew to an end. But, you ask, what was the student life like? My dear, there was no student life. Those who came from beyond Edinburgh lived in lodgings, alone, or two or three in the same house. The life was severe, the loneliness sometimes hard to bear. There was no College refectory, no common room, no Students' Union. In the lodging, it almost seems to me at this distance of time, that the *pièce de resistance* of the six o'clock dinner was on four days of the week a steak and on three days of the week a chop. Sometimes, I confess, it *was* a *pièce de resistance*—in more senses than one.

Yet why complain? Were we not conscious that many others of our fellow-students rarely saw butcher meat? Men of stalwart bearing, and nerves and muscle of iron: oatmeal was their staple diet; and they grew masters of themselves, learning to "scorn delights and live laborious days." Some tutored in families, struggling to make ends meet, and some succumbed, their purses drained by the payment of fees, and they sickened and died.

I rejoice that the life of the poor student is now infinitely happier, infinitely more human. I love the poor student. He is of earth's best.

This loneliness, this segregation of young manhood,

produced curious results. Not meeting one another except in the somewhat formal atmosphere of, it might be, a debating society, where the only big tussles were on points of order, the students got no advantage of "iron sharpening iron." They wanted to be independent: yet what they were taught was no matter of debate; they followed the professor like sheep through a gate.

Yet, as I say, they wanted to be independent. Of this I will give you an instance. About the end of my curriculum I became, if you please, Assistant Professor of Ethics (I hope your mind is sufficiently solemnized!), and I delivered a short course of lectures to, say, seventy students. In the course of examining some problem, I said: "Upon this point I differ from the Professor."

You should have heard the gasp, and then a storm of cheers enough to blow the roof off. Nobody in all their experience—and they were in their last Arts year—had ever ventured to differ from a Professor. And here they were, asked to sit in judgment on a difference between a Professor and a Lecturer. The fun of it!

At the next examination they gave the good man value for his money. And he was a good man was Dr. Calderwood—a capital teacher, expositor, debater. He said to me: "What's in the heads of these fellows? Most of them are saying that I am wrong. Where did they get that?" "I am afraid," said I, "they got it from me!" "Oh, that's it," said he, and he laughed loud and long; and then he added: "Now, you know, that is first-rate; they have all been working this thing out. It is teaching them to think for themselves." And I can guarantee that none

of them suffered one whit in their awarded values for differing from the Professor.

The fact was that philosophy was hitting me rather hard; I was reading myself nearly blind with a great variety of stuff, revelling in Jowett's Plato, moved beyond belief with, say, the "Apologia" and the later books of the "Republic," passing along, and possibly more hit by Leibnitz than any of the others—and landing and standing long on Kant—pure reason, categorical imperative, and all the rest of it—and having as a working guide a wonderful little History of Philosophy by Schwegler.

After a killing examination a fellowship of £300 came my way. And here is an odd thing. The Fellowship was founded in memory of Sir William Hamilton. But among the things that most stimulated me in these studies was the Examination of that same Hamilton's Philosophy by John Stuart Mill—a clever, penetrating book (one need not agree with all of it), in which Hamilton is vigorously reduced to mince-meat. I don't think a word was asked about Hamilton "of pious memory"; but, if there had been, I was no doubt prepared to attack him on Mill's lines.

It almost looked as if I were going to be a professor. Had I ambitions in that direction? I had no ambitions whatsoever. I had distractions—distractions as to how I was to earn my living. There were rivals to philosophy in the field. Here was one.

In those days the Lord Rector of a Scotch University was a person of distinction in the world of scholarship or letters, and the practice of making these students' elections a political battle was not so common. Great names there had been among the rectors, and the recollections of

men were still fresh of the great addresses of Gladstone, of Carlyle, and of Froude. In such a class and rank Sir William Stirling Maxwell was deservedly placed.

One of the first things he did was to offer a Rectorial prize on "the causes which prevented the Spanish-American dominions from being a source of wealth and power to Spain." Here was an encouragement to research. Not research in general, on which so much vague sentiment is expended, but specific research, research on a prescribed topic.

Students, "researchers," inquiring and willing young fellows, by the scores and by the hundreds, not having a specific and commanding lead, not being told what to do and where to go, simply roam about the vast open fields, say, of literature, of history, or of science; grow stale; and reach nowhere. It was so then; it is so still. A dozen of such exercises—essays in the true sense of being independent efforts of the mind and faculty—a dozen of such in each University would do more for the intellect of students than all the lectures of twice a dozen professors. Would that not suit University authorities? And is that why they are so slow in this direction? Perish the thought!

Anyhow, I can judge by what Maxwell did. His rectorial problem set a band of us nosing around—in economics, in history and in theories of government, and we saw country which we might never have seen but for the coveted distinction—and the five-and-twenty guineas!

It was no slight thing to have to dive deep into Adam Smith and to feel the sweep of the eloquent impressionist

view of Spanish history by Buckle, and the check and sedative of such a writer as Sir George Cornewall Lewis "on the Government of Dependencies." Such things were the beginnings, too, of new thoughts as to public life; for if history and economics be not the prime equipment of the politician, what are?

"But," I think I hear you say, "you were going to tell me what the rival to philosophy was." Forgive me, dear, for wandering. It is an odious thing when people, especially fathers, start airing their "views." Well, the result of the rectorial affair was that Masson, one of the examiners, sent me down to Professor Baynes, then editing the "Britannica." They were about that time willing to have historical matter, and so, starting with the buccaneers, as a sort of branch of the Spanish-American subject, I slid into the regions of Scotch and French biography. If this was literature, it was pretty solid stuff. Not the glorious literature which has been woven into the texture of my life, as you within the circle of the home have known it. But—one had to work, and one had to live.

Yet suddenly in this grubbing among historical matter a great light would shine. What a gallery it was! Desmoulins, say, and Marat, the Rolands, Talleyrand and Vergniaud. Of all these Vergniaud, the Girondist leader, most impressed the imagination. I have often thought of that day when the trial of the illustrious band was summarily stopped lest their further eloquence should move even hearts of stone. More often have I thought of the evening of that day when Vergniaud "reasoned sublimely" on the immortality of the soul, ere he passed with his gifted company—twenty-one in number—the

flower of France—passed with them, in the dawn, to the block.

And on the literary side this curious fact stuck in the mind. Over and over again in the life and testimony of these stormy figures you saw from the records that their revolutionary ardour had been fired by one torch, namely, the writings of Plutarch. As if thus, across the centuries, Deep were calling unto Deep!

* * * * *

Meantime, where was the law? Well, my dear, the classes in the law were my trade—taught as a trade and learned as a trade. I make no pretence to remember anything worth uttering. Jurisprudence, serene, splendid, the august image of ordered rule among men and nations: that I never beheld, even in vision, in all my College course. Whirl and excitements, examinations, degrees, a business training, and ever with an eye on the finger of the clock. Ah, me! Cares and responsibilities there are yet; and they are heavy. Yet how dare I complain, even in memory?

> "If after every tempest come such calms,
> May the winds blow till they have wakened death."

One other rival still. Philosophy and literature and law seemed suddenly to become side issues. I fell in love with your mother. At first sight—and for ever. I say it reverently after forty years.

But how could I ask such a one to share the fortunes of a problematical, philosophical professor, or a literary hack? No: for her sake it must be the law. A legend of fair women, it seemed to be. The hand of the one had led me through the humble country portal; and now the

hope of another seemed to beckon me through the metropolitan gate.

That was the kind of impetuous, fantastical, distracted person who, in 1875 entered the Edinburgh Parliament House. Friends, acquaintances, he had none, either on the Bench or at the Bar. .

Tired? I don't wonder. Off to bed!

Your loving

FATHER.

LETTER IX

THROUGH THE METROPOLITAN GATE

1, *Palace Gate.*

October 24, 1919.

MY DEAR CHILD,

Well! here I am, in the south again, and in the dear old library, and hoping soon to see your very own self.

"Whereunto shall I liken" that generation of lawyers who then trod the boards of the old historic Parliament House of Scotland? Like every other generation, it was all sorts of people. What thought they, for instance, of the Parliament House itself? The plain man amongst them thought simply, and he said: "Fine hall, fine roof, fine floor, and on the walls those glorious Raeburns!" The wit dubbed it the "*salle des pas perdus.*" But when the enthusiast would venture so far as: "It is the temple of Themis"—then the philistine would slide in with: "Themis, did you say? Not Themis. The name is Grundy. Temple of Mrs. Grundy."

There was truth with all of these gentlemen. The law had a solid and dignified home. The trampings of many young men there have been so fruitless! And, upon nearly every mother's son of them, convention there had a narrowing and tyrannical power. Yet withal, justice there was sought after, was veritably worshipped. Had you been there and asked me to prove this, I should have pointed

you to two figures, strikingly dissimilar in bodily appearance, but strikingly alike in their acquaintance with the development of the law and their loyalty and reverence to that which underlies it and is deeper and nobler than all its earthly sanctions. Inglis—commanding and austerely majestic on the bench. Kind to me he was, and quickly so. And at the bar Kinnear, soon to be Dean. That trembling and apparently nervous figure concealed a spirit of the rarest courage, and a mind so sweet that I do not believe that there ever crossed it—and I speak of him after long years (he was Dean and Scotch Judge, and in late years my colleague in the Lords)—I do not believe that there ever crossed it one single ignoble thought.

But where was I? I was speaking of that inevitable division of young men, which you may dub, if you like, rings or parties. To which of these parties or sets of men did your father belong? Alas! dear, to none. No set claimed him: no set knew him: he was alone. I believe that had he not kept himself busily exercised he would have felt the cold.

This must have been so, I think, because of the surprise I felt when—it was the day after I had donned the gown—pacing the Parliament Hall, I was suddenly confronted by McKechnie, a brawny and bewigged Highlander, who held out his hand and bade me welcome. Why was I thus honoured? I asked. "Oh," said he, "I have heard about you speaking in my old debating club, the Tusculan Society."

Thirty years afterwards I was pacing the same boards, but I was differently attired. I had just presented to the Court my Commission as Lord Advocate, and use and

wont sent me to walk up and down the great hall. On those occasions anyone is a guy—black doeskin coat and breeches, silk stockings, shoes with steel buckles, and, over all, that beautiful black betasselled gown which a great Lord Advocate, Lord Moncreiff, had furnished as a handsome perquisite for the use of his successors. "Mr. Dowell," said I to my clerk, standing on guard and hat in hand in the crowd, "Mr. Dowell, send for McKechnie." "What, my Lord?" said he, rather nonplussed. "Bring McKechnie."

The brave McKechnie had had a struggle and a history during that lapse of years. A native of Jura, he had reached his boyish ambition and had risen to be Sheriff of Argyll; then had had to resign all through illness; but he had pluckily begun again and was again gathering a practice.

He came, bowed low, spoke his felicitations, and asked why I had done him the honour to send for him.

"McKechnie," said I, "when I came here thirty years ago, friendless and alone, you were the first to bid me welcome. So I thought that I should like, on this morning, to have the privilege of shaking you by the hand." He was visibly moved, and murmured a few words; and we shook hands and parted.

I am away from the early days; but, you see, you tempt me to these asides. So let us go back. Yes, it was a lonely business; the solitude enough sometimes to strike one to the heart. Yet whose fault was it? I could not have it both ways and every way. My "immersion" was philosophy; my true delights were in literature. And apart from private friendships, which were not within my range, there was not and there is not to this day, in Scot-

land, that general camaraderie of those Inns of Court which are a true and sweet ornament of the English and Irish Bar. As with University life, so with legal life, it was all the veritable rigour of the game.

That is enough for you at present. Off you go. Shoo!

Your very own,

SHAW OF D.

LETTER X

MURDER? FORGERY? NEITHER

The North House,
Hertford.

December 7, 1919.

DEAREST INFANTA,

You remember the scandalous Sunday afternoons? After being twice to church—all of us as a family—you stormed my citadel, or rather my story-factory, where the genuine home-made article was unfolded by the yard, and how you, of all the pack, you were the most insistent for a "bluggy" one? All of you were set on "thrills." When the drama in doggerel came along—a Sunday composition!—with four parts, one for each of you, and a fifth part for Cousin David—you strove to thicken the plot and even help the rhymes?

Prologue

"The theme is Love, so deep and tender"—

Author: "Now then, children, what rhymes with 'tender'?"

Chorus: "Fender!"

Author: "Right. Here goes again:—

"The theme is Love, so deep and tender,
And Crime as low and black as the fender:
And Magic, baffling Crime so well,
That Love ends with the marriage-bell.
Threads of Love and threads of Crime
Are woven in this Nursery Rhyme."

And so on. You remember? Well then, you are still after thrills, I know; and you think that a young barrister's acquaintance with the criminal classes should produce some?

I will, if I must. But bear in mind that a Scotch advocate in good practice has hardly ever a good criminal case. If he is on the Lord Advocate's team, of course he must prosecute; but never otherwise; for in that happy country private prosecution is unknown. An offence is an offence against society, and society takes it in hand and sees to its punishment and, if possible, its extirpation, and that with never a smack of private umbrage or rancour or hostility or revenge.

And the Courts are scrupulous that every prisoner, however forlorn, shall be defended. So young advocates roam the country with the Assizes, called the Circuit Courts. Should they disappear, still the rule holds, and the Bench there and then orders the sheriffs or County Court judges to don the wig, and defend the defenceless, be he the veriest wretch according to every code of prejudice or probability.

It was on one of these journeys—to Glasgow—that I was asked to hold a junior brief for one Doherty, and in this humble way I became participant in proceedings which culminated in a callous and sinister judicial murder.

I have looked up no records of the case, but shall give you the ghastly features of it, just as it remains for ever stamped upon my mind.

Doherty and his sweetheart were standing at the door of her dwelling near the Bridge of Rutherglen. A man passed and flung a word of gross insult at the girl. Doherty sprang forward and seized a hoe that was lean-

ing against the wall. He struck the man a single blow, or, as you might say, gave the man a whack with the hoe. Unhappily, and most surprisingly, the blow was mortal: the man was killed.

There was not the slightest suggestion of deadly intent, not the slightest hint of anything like animosity further than the passing resentment against the affront to the sweetheart by his side. And Doherty's good character was sworn to; his life had been blameless. It was as plain a case of manslaughter—or, as they say in the North, of culpable homicide—and as plainly not a case of murder, as ever was seen.

Then misadventure crowded upon misadventure. Robertson, the Advocate Depute, strangely enough, but with skill, pleaded for a verdict of murder. The judge, Lord Neaves, was then old and somewhat enfeebled: he made the way clear for the minor verdict; but the jury could not hear him. All that they did hear was an old peroration (it had done duty before) about the majesty of British justice; and they got it into their heads that the law was that murder had been committed. They convicted, with a recommendation to mercy.

Still calamity followed calamity. The Home Secretary had the petition of reprieve sent to him; the judge backed it with his opinion. But it was the holiday season; some confusion, it was said, occurred with another and far less deserving case of real murder where a false plea of insanity had been set up. The Home Secretary, be that as it may, reprieved the latter man, declined to interfere in the Rutherglen case, and young Doherty was hanged. In three weeks, as if to complete the tragedy, his aged father died of a broken heart.

John Bright in his place in Parliament denounced the transaction as a judicial murder. And a judicial murder it was. From that hour to this I have ceased to believe in the punishment of death. Cases, in the intervening years, have occurred which have deepened my conviction. Every human judgment is mingled with human error, and in the issues of life and death no judge should be charged with an irrevocable doom.

* * * * *

Perhaps, dear, you have got more than you bargained for when you set me loose on this track. Let me now draw you a cloud with a silver lining. No longer murder, but forgery.

Persons or even places I will not name, and that for obvious reasons, though the scene was between forty and fifty years ago. I had in fact just passed to the Bar, I was myself a high-strung actor, and everything in it remains indelibly impressed upon my mind.

"Is it right for an advocate to defend a prisoner whom he knows to be guilty?" How often have families discussed this old problem, and how often have debating societies debated it? Aye, and how often has the conscientious, scrupulous man been troubled by it? Well, listen. I was about to get my answer to it, and my answer for life.

A day's journey from the circuit and county town of X was the little village of Y. And in the neighbourhood of Y dwelt two farmers, brothers-in-law. In those days, far more, happily, than now, bills went flying about a country community, one farmer backing another's notes, and the other returning the accommodation, till you had

almost said that one of the acknowledged processes of agriculture was the circulation of blue paper. Now and again there were charges of forgery, and strange happenings on that head were investigated in the criminal courts.

Presiding over that circuit was Lord Young, whose reputation for intellectual force, and whose disposition towards the rapid dispatch of business had, of course, preceded him. This predisposed everyone to the view that it was more in a prisoner's own interest to plead guilty than to set up a hopeless defence.

Suddenly a big bundle of papers was put into my hand, and I retired to read them through, and again read them through. I came to the clear opinion that the accused, whom I shall call "Mr. Prisoner," was a guilty man. Was this, then, the old problem in front of me? I must make sure.

So, wig and gown and all, I went down into the cells and asked for an interview.

"Mr. Prisoner," said I, "you know the judge on the bench?"

"I have read about him," said he.

"Mr. Prisoner," I asked, "have you a family?"

"Sir," he said, "I have a wife and eight children."

He was a broadly built, simple-minded-looking, honest-looking man. But the case against him was clear; and how to get him the easiest terms was the point.

"Mr. Prisoner," said I, "I have gone over all the documents, and honestly I think that your best way would be just to plead guilty at once, and I shall say what I can in mitigation of sentence."

He showed no surprise at this, none; he seemed to

take it for granted that this was inevitable, and was the reasonable view. So he said, "Very well, sir, I will do whatever you say. I will plead guilty."

I wish to make quite clear to you that that was the length he went. It would have been brutal to treat him as in the confessional; that is no part of an advocate's duty and would have been presumption in a stripling. But, of course, nothing could be clearer, as to his guilt. To my own personal conviction he was to add his own solemn plea. I returned to the Court.

There was another case going on, and it lasted some time. I sat on, my head full of the coming task. Then one of those curious psychological phenomena took place, which I have never been able to account for, and which old-fashioned people would reverently place to a special Divine interposition. I came to think that perhaps the prisoner's plea of guilty would be a false plea. Perhaps my own conviction of his guilt was quite a mistake. Perhaps he was the victim of an infamous conspiracy which —God help me with my inexperience and lack of skill— it was my duty to try to unravel.

In a little he came from below and sat between two policemen, placing his two hands on the rail in front. *Those hands did it!* I should explain to you that the forgery was the most skilful I have ever known—a precise and delicate piece of work.

My doubts in an instant gave way to a conviction that *those hands could never have done it.* They were broad, fat, bulgy, unwieldy. I leaned over the dock and said: "Mr. Prisoner, plead not guilty." He rose, dazed but obedient, bowed to the judge, and so pleaded. The judge said sharply: "I thought this was to be a plea of guilty."

"The prisoner pleads not guilty," said I. He looked at me, then at the prisoner; and the trial began.

You must understand that there were six bills; numbers 1, 3 and 5 were said to be genuine, and numbers 2, 4 and 6 were said to be forged. They were all, say, drawn by the prisoner upon and accepted by his brother-in-law. The bills had got into the hands of a so-called accountant in the village.

Mr. Accountant swore that he could get his money on the forged bills neither from the brother-in-law, to whom he had written, nor from the accused. So he had set the authorities in action.

"Where do you live?" I asked. "And what do you do?"

"In the village of Y," said he; "and I am an accountant."

"How many inhabitants has Y?" to which came the answer:

"About three hundred."

"As an accountant in this village of three hundred," I asked, "do you keep any books?"

The witness flamed up, demanding loudly of the judge whether he was bound to answer about his private affairs.

Said the judge: "The question is very simple: 'Do you keep any books?'"

"I keep a letter-book," said the witness.

"Your only book?" said I.

"Yes," said he; "and I have it here."

"You say that you wrote to the acceptor of these three bills that they were overdue; is that letter booked?"

"It is," said the witness; "and it is *there*."

The book was handed down. I had never seen it;

but lo! the entry was as I expected! As an office boy I had known that page-and-a-half letters left, of course, a half-page which might be filled up by another short letter. And I had often thought that that was a bad system, for a little letter might be slipped into the vacant plot long afterwards—in fact, so long as the plot remained. It seemed to me clear that this was exactly what had been done. When the witness finally resolved to put the law into operation, he preceded that by concocting such a letter to be booked into a date and place with a suitable blank.

By this time the judge, who had given me every consideration, showed signs of very watchful interest. "Hand me that book," said he, and he kept it beside him.

Then I launched my bolt. "Do you sell bill stamps?" I asked.

The witness went into a fury of protest. The judge said, "Witness, the words are very short words: 'Do you sell bill stamps?' Do you understand them?"

"Yes," said he.

"Then answer them," came the command. And the answer was in the affirmative.

The next witness was the brother-in-law, who, of course, denied the signatures. When I asked him whether on a certain date he had received a letter from the previous witness, Lord Young handed down the letter-book and said, "Read the letter aloud and plainly to him."

I did so. The witness showed signs of impatience, but I read on to the end. Then he said in a loud voice, "My Lord, I never got such a letter in the course of my life."

The Judge said firmly to the Crown Prosecutor, "Mr. Advocate Depute, of the two principal witnesses for the Crown, one or other has committed perjury."

Result, collapse; the prisoner, poor, dazed, honest soul, dismissed expressly without a stain upon his character. The verdict was universally approved. Innocence had triumphed. And, furthermore—not a soul in that crowded Court without the sure conviction that he knew the true answer—do you?—to the question, Who was the forger?

A wicked world, my darling, but upon the whole Justice does come to its own. And in the course of that process, never have any doubt as to where the advocate's duty lies. What was the problem? "Is it right for him to defend a man whom he knows to be guilty?" The presumption of an advocate even thinking that he knows! I learned my lesson. Let in such presumption, and Justice might be debauched by cowardice, and on coward's terms defeated.

Your highly respected

FATHER.

LETTER XI

TRACTS OF WILDERNESS

Craigmyle.

May 27, 1920.

ISABEL DEAR,

One evening a few months ago I was sitting in the dear library of Palace Gate when who should stalk in but Sir Robert Horne, the Minister of Labour—just as capable as a Minister of the Crown as he had been so often as a junior to myself in Edinburgh. He told me how the dockers at all the ports of the Kingdom had consolidated their forces and tabled their demands, how the employers and they wanted a Court of Inquiry, how there were serious chances of the whole sea-borne trade of the country being held up, and—I was wanted by the Government as President of the Court. I stoutly refused; the strain of these things was too great now; they must get a younger man, and all the rest of it.

What did the fellow do? He went off to Paris where the Conference of the great ones of the earth was sitting trying to re-shape the world after the Great War. And in two days I had a telegram, in the name of the Prime Minister, and Mr. Bonar Law, the Leader of the Commons, and the Lord Chancellor, and Horne himself, asking me to take up the task. So the Dockers' Inquiry had to be faced; a ticklish job, with many economic, national and human interests hanging about it, as to which

I may tell you something by and by. On that I make no promise.

Then after that task was over came, for hearing and decision, a swarm of law cases, dull, heavy, clamant—and so the letters to you receded out of sight. Months elapsed.

But stop; who went there? It was Time itself; and it hit me a whipping reminder. *I was seventy last Sunday.* The other day I forgathered with a good old boatman in similar case and on the eve of superannuation.

"Ah, my Lord," said he, "I'm not what I was; I am not so sturdy; you see, I am growing old."

"Stop that, James Macdonald," said I; "you have a lot more ill to do yet."

"Well, my Lord," said he, solemnly, "I hope so." Then he stopped short, realizing his slip; and we both fell a-laughing. In that hearty spirit I yield to your solicitations and I open the latch of memory. Where was I?

Ah! it was about my law cases. Well, to tell the truth, my recollections of them are fortunately dim; the one case crushed out the other; and I could cry off on that score alone. But there is the other also—the real disrelish of anything which would savour of an attempt to make a hero out of a person in drab. For which reason—there and thereabouts—all legal autobiographies ought to be burned.

It is a case for compromise. So you will get no more from me than another story about the beginning of the advocate's life. And perhaps, if time permit and memory serve, some sample of interest towards its close.

Let me tell you the story of the Trial of the Lewis Deer Raiders.

It is difficult to make anyone now realize the extraordinary acuteness of controversial feeling over the Highland land question forty years ago. Society, the population of Scotland at large, was divided by a deep, broad chasm. I had rather said, speaking in a special sense of the one and in a general sense of the other, Society was on one side of the chasm; the population was on the other. The three outstanding problems were, the tragically unequal distribution of land, the insecurity of the crofter or small cultivator in his holding, and the unfairness of his rent, this last producing a positively pitiable dead-weight of debt in the shape of arrears.

The first—the inequality in the distribution of land—is a puzzle old as the centuries. I do not say it is insoluble, far from that; but it still remains, and it will probably remain until the whole shape and colour of government in this country undergo a fundamental change.

But the second and third of these problems were within the reach of the statesmanship of the day, and so came the Crofters Act of 1886. Hardly had it been passed into law and the Commissioners appointed, when down came the Liberal Government, and a Unionist Government—strong, powerful, determined, and with very different landlord and tenant views—reigned in its stead.

But the visits and perambulations of the Crofters Commissioners, of course, however, went on, and with them there appeared to be, and in truth there was, the dawn of a new and better era.

As I say, it is now difficult even to figure the strength of the opposition between the two views—of those who defended their passionate attachment to their homes, under the names of fixity of tenure and of fair rent, and those who defended the right of eviction and the duty of submission, under the names of freedom of contract and of law and order.

Feeling was fanned into a flame by Mr. Chamberlain. Mr. Chamberlain was never in his life afraid to be in advance of the band. He passed like a fiery cross on to Inverness. I remember yet the electrical effect of his citation from the Canadian Boat Song:

> "From the dear shieling on the misty island
> Mountains divide us and a world of seas;
> But still our hearts are true, our hearts are Highland,
> And in our dreams we see the Hebrides.
> Tall are those mountains and those woods are grand;
> But we are exiles from our native land."

There was no mistaking the application of the lines, and they pealed like a trumpet through the North.

Of the Hebrides, Tiree, belonging to the Duke of Argyll, and Lewis, belonging to the Mathieson family, were among the worst areas of unrest. So in the year 1887-8 the Crofters Commissioners were to visit Lewis to hear evidence and to look about. And in a little schoolroom of Belallan, near Stornoway, a meeting was held for the worthy purpose of arranging who should be the witnesses and of getting together a few pounds for the crofters' case.

At this meeting, however, arrangements, not so worthy and not so wise, were made for something more demonstrative and emphatic. The deer preserve—an immense

and, of course, lonely forest—was to be invaded and some of the deer killed, with all sorts of claims mooted to more land, more land. In a fortnight afterwards, in the same month of November, 1887, the raid took place.

The prime instigator was an able speaker and land reformer, the schoolmaster, Donald Macrae. If there was to be a case about it, the Government were right to hold him quite as responsible as the actual participants in the expedition. And so, sure enough, when six brawny and bewildered Islemen stood up in the dock of the Edinburgh High Court of Justiciary to answer the fateful question, "Are you guilty or not guilty?" the least brawny and least bewildered of them all, the schoolmaster Macrae, was first on the list.

The authorities had lost no time; the trial was in January, 1888. As to the place, imagine if you can two places in the whole land of Scotland more dissevered in outlook, in habits of mind and life, in sympathy, than on the one hand the bare and rain-swept outpost in the Hebrides, and, on the other, Edinburgh and its Parliament House! If the avoiding of local prejudice was to be secured, it was secured; and if there was even a risk of reaching an opposite camp of feeling, that was a bearable misfortune!

As to the bench, a thing rarely, if ever, seen, occurred. To keep the ordinary jury right in point of law—there was really very little law in the case—three judges occupied the seat of justice instead of one. As to the bar, the situation was queer: apparently it was considered hardly respectable to defend such people—a forgery or a murder case was all very well—but such people! So the rumour went that the defence had been offered to and not accepted

by ——; but I know nothing of that. The case came my way in the ordinary course; I defended the schoolmaster and another of the accused, a worthy local merchant. Their names stood first on the list of prisoners and so I had to lead, owing to that circumstance. Another prisoner was defended by Strachan, a man of wide literary knowledge and of a real power of eloquence. Others defended others: quite an array! A kind of sub-consciousness that there was more in the struggle than the case gave the whole a spice of adventure.

Now, with all these advantages of place, time, sympathy, prestige, in their favour, what went wrong with the Crown authorities? Simply, my dear, what goes wrong with such people so often: they overshot the mark. They charged the accused with nothing other and nothing less than "mobbing and rioting"! The loneliness of the spot, the total absence of any terror or alarm to anybody, except the deer or the hawk or the curlew; the fact that when the local sheriff heard of the incursion he went out and spoke a word of kindly counsel to the men, who thereupon all went off to their own homes—all this—I am saying what I believed then and (saving their Eminences in some high places) what I still think—all this made a charge of mobbing and rioting ridiculous. The advantage of it, however, from an administrative point of view, was this—that conviction could be followed by such swingeing sentences, even of penal servitude, as might stamp out land agitation for a generation.

"But," I said at consultation before the trial, "these men did wrong, though they were not mobbing and rioting, did they not?"

Then I was answered by my junior, an industrious

and most thoughtful man, now Sheriff McPhail; and his answer is one for which he and he alone has the entire credit:

"They committed," said he, "an offence against an Act of William IV (which he cited). They assembled and trespassed, to the number of five or more, in pursuit of game. Penalty, £5 each."

"I see," said I; and on that we ran the case. Five pounds a head would not satisfy the prosecutor; he was out for penal servitude.

There is really nothing more on the legal side to tell. What was proved was pretty much what I have set down. Yet the prosecution was bitter, and always on the high horse. The Solicitor-General demanded a verdict of mobbing and rioting as "absolutely necessary and imperative for the interests of the State." This, of course, let in the whole point of law and a good deal more. A five pound fine: not enough for the interests of the State: get up something, however grotesque, which would resound, in every sense of the term, in something more penal. A Government prosecution: nothing but a political persecution; however the bench might disapprove, that we fought openly and without reserve. All of us, counsel for the defence, stood together.

Two things I should like to tell you about this trial; one, a literary reference, which I think affected it in its course, and another, a statistical fact, which gives much cause for reflection on the action of Governments in all such cases.

On the first matter, as you may imagine, the nature of the charge—mobbing and rioting in a solitude—naturally led me to observations on local history and

economy. What a picture it was! No less than one hundred and fifty square miles in the one forest, under deer. The people lifted from the good inland holdings to the wastes near the shore, and the whole inland consolidated—turned into one vast solitude—for sport. Then I quoted, amid dead silence, Tennyson's lines on Pagan England:—

> "And so there grew great tracts of wilderness
> Wherein the beast was ever more and more,
> And man was less and less."

There was an uproar in Court, in which I think I saw the jury joining with their feet—a tumult which the Court and ushers peremptorily suppressed. The land lay safe. Each of the three judges charged the unfortunate jury. But the jury's mind was clear: there was no "not proven" about it. All the six prisoners were found not guilty. They went outside amid acclamations, and the schoolmaster spoke with fire and passion wild and exuberant things.

The next thing is what I know that you and all shrewd persons like yourself would want to be at, namely this—was there any real and substantial thing in fact which can explain among such people such an *émeute?* You are neither hocussed nor overawed by forms of law, and you want to know what was at the back of it all.

Well then, listen to this. The Commissioners went round. They made their independent investigations. They reported—I looked into the Report the other day—that in the Lewis, the Mathieson estate, there were 772 holdings on a rent-roll of £2,384, but that this rent was in excess of a fair rent by £755. But affairs were sadly worse than that. Suffering for years this excess,

and bound to submit to it or leave their homes, these tenants had fallen into arrears: they were under a burden of this debt to the staggering amount of £14,845. Surely life under such circumstances was without help or hope; yet they nursed their misery and looked upon eviction as doom. At one stroke the Commissioners cancelled arrears by no less than £10,216, and the mountain of debt was reduced to a manageable balance, which was paid. In all, rents were reduced by about 30 per cent. and arrears cancelled by 70 per cent. Similar enormous reductions were made over great spaces of the North and West. It was better so for all parties, even financially, for rents were no longer piled up: they were paid.

The new system did not fail. On the contrary, it was in its main features, of fair rent and fixity of tenure for all smallholders, extended by and by to the whole of the country. Remember that the Raid took place in the darkness before the dawn. The protest of the Raid may have been incoherent, violent, if you like, ridiculous; but men of all classes were startled by it into a consciousness that it was a protest against a system which even in good hands lent itself to oppression.

The defence made this consciousness articulate, and all through the Highlands this fact—a big, new fact—was received with boundless and lasting gratitude. I did not realize this or any of these more general things in the outspoken hammer and tongs bit of work that had to be done. But of this gratitude I will give you a curious instance.

More than thirty years after the trial, Alexander was the guest of his father-in-law, Lord Inchcape, in Ross-shire. When fishing on one of the beautiful lochs, he

was conscious that the boatman was watching him keenly.

"Are you, sir," said the ghillie, "begging your pardon, are you, sir, related to Lord Shaw?"

"I am his son," said Alexander. And then the boatman, solemnly taking off his bonnet, said these words:—

"Sir, there is many a man in the Highlands would die for your father."

Please do not be flattering yourself that that had anything to do with your father himself, more than this—that, as I have said, he made, at a critical social juncture—he made articulate the consciousness of undeserved misery.

Your ever loving

S. OF D.

LETTER XII

WORSE THAN AN INFIDEL

Townhill Park,
Southampton.
December 31, 1919.

MY DEAREST LASS,

The year draws to its close. It is a time for looking back, and for your sake and by your wish I am looking back pretty far. One searches for "the things that cannot be shaken." They remain. Fashions are volatile; customs grow stale; many conventions, once hard as iron, have melted like wax. Does anything, then, anything at all, in all the range and governance of life, stand sure? Well, that depends. And it depends, more than on any other one thing you can name, on how you have been brought up.

This illustration occurs to my mind. The Sabbath Day. I reverence it and I prize it. Forgive the paraphrase: but it is "the balm of each week's life, sore labour's bath." I say nothing about its divine institution, though I believe in that too, as you well know. But it has been sorely mishandled when it has lost its place of privilege and become an interruption and a bore. Take my own case. I can truly say that for over thirty years of my life there was not one week-end on which I could not have pleaded exhaustion and left work over for Sunday. And I am also as truly certain of this, that if I had yielded to

that temptation I should long ago have been in my grave.

The really laborious man cannot afford to work on Sunday. Often and often have I seen times when the strain of nerve and battle was so great, that one strove through it and towards the Sabbath calm with a certain passionate exaltation of mind.

I know quite well the habit of week-ending, how it grows—although it appears to be going off a bit—and how the reasons for it in many cases are well worth considering. But if such week-ending be but a whirl of exciting gaiety, it is a point of grave question whether it does not do more to disturb the true balance of life than to restore it, or whether indeed it would not have been better openly to ignore the institution of the Sabbath altogether, and to go on without it.

That at least would more quickly bring the revulsion. As when France, saddened, sickened and exhausted with but a year or two of the *décadi*, restored the Christian Sabbath as a central institution of religion come again. You remember how Vandal treats the incident in one of the most moving passages of "L'Avènement de Bonaparte." He calls upon you to listen to the awakening of the little church bells from the nightmare of a ruthless rationalism. Parish calls to parish:—

> "Ecoutez! C'est l'éveil: c'est l'insurrection, c'est la résurrection des cloches!"

It was, as it were, the soothing of the nervous tension of the world.

Anyhow, my Sabbaths gave to me my happiest moments, and, in a great stretch of years crowded with professional and public cares, they made family life in

From a photograph by Poole, Waterford.

ISABEL.

any responsible sense a possibility. Literary things, divine things, the significance of life for oneself, for all dear to one, for the great moving world; going to church —why, that was but part of the natural homage which one paid to that supreme need which every sensible soul feels for moral replenishment, unless he be a butterfly, or a miser, or a clod.

Only, of course, dimly did I realize these things when in *your* youth I adhered to the principles of my own. But the more clearly that I see them now, the less in that adhesion do I see to regret.

No rigidity, perhaps, except in the sense that the foundations of life should be solid, and be well and truly laid. This, after a long experience, in which I have observed a greater sense of hurry in the pulses and the pace of human society—this at least one can truly say, that the value of the Sabbath for the best uses of mankind is an increasing value: its depreciation would mean a real degeneration in all those processes of civilization which make for the energy, the usefulness, the happiness of men.

As to the Church—just bear with me for a moment —when I speak of that, you will not, of course, take me up in the Roman or the English sense. I do not mean any privileged enclave of which the governor is a padre and in which the sheep are sheep indeed. I mean a spiritual community, purely spiritual, of men and women gathered together for the sake of One who, however small their numbers, has promised to be in their midst. Such men and women have laid upon them not merely the delights of a profound faith and a glorious hope, but the duty and responsibilities of themselves

witnessing and working. For them to shoulder that sometimes irksome task on to the clergy as a clerical affair—that would be mean.

There was a democracy for you! Well, it was in this school of thought and duty that I was brought up.

The worst is yet to come. Bad enough to be a Presbyterian. But was I of those eminent and respected Presbyterians whose Church was under the patronage and control of the State, to which so many of the nobility and landed gentry belonged until they too in more fashionable times "lapsed" into Episcopacy? Not even that. My ancestry, my upbringing, my beliefs, were all with a set of pious, able and determined men called United Presbyterians. Happy memories of your childhood and youth recall them, and perhaps some time I may tell you how they appeared to myself. But farther back than they, the same class of thinkers was called the Secession. But (now you must not be too proud!) my heart and faith went farther back still: I believe I must have been an Anti-burgher!

Once upon a time (1596) the Reformation principles were being played fast and loose with by a Scottish King with, to say the least of it, an accommodating spirit. And the story is well known how at Falkland Andrew Melville answered the false claim of prerogative, plucking the monarch by the sleeve, and declaring: "There are two Kings and two Kingdoms in Scotland. There is Christ Jesus the King, and His Kingdom, the Kirk, whose subject King James the Sixth is, and of whose Kingdom not a king, nor a lord, nor a head, but a member." Well done, Andrew Melville! Sure am I that, if he had been spared, he would have been an Anti-burgher!

Once when I was Solicitor-General for Scotland, I had to take a turn in the House of Commons on some Church subject. Being in a rollicking mood, and seeing before me quite a galaxy of Tory Churchmen, I condoled with them. When they came north of the Tweed every mother's son of them would be a Dissenter! The old wheeze! But it hit them hard, with wonder and with merriment. Sir Richard Temple tendered me his most courtly felicitations!

One of the duties of this same Solicitor-General, by the by, was that he should be in attendance on the Lord High Commissioner to the Church of Scotland, the traditional task being, on the King's behalf, to watch out for ecclesiastical pretensions! This gave rise to fun. When the dear Lord Advocate Balfour was asked in the Commons lobby what had become of his Solicitor-General, he replied: "Well, you see, ah! he is bowing down in the Temple of Rimmon." And the wags of the Parliament House maintained that when my carriage drove up in the procession towards the General Assembly, the band struck up the refrain: "'E doan' know where 'e are!"

But all this is cutting far beyond the point, namely, the events and aspects of the young advocate's life. Well, one of those aspects was this direct point of early religious training. When Milton wrote of Sir Harry Vane—

> "The bounds of either sword to thee we owe,"

and—

> "Both spiritual things and civil, what each means,
> What severs each, thou hast learned, which few have known,"

he was pronouncing in immortal words the *éloge* of human penetration on one of the most delicate and profound problems which will remain to torment or to inspire public

men, until the political stage is reached of the separation —as in America and throughout our colonial empire—of Church and State.

Well, that, of course, was a problem which came my way. My own view, and the view of those able, far-sighted men with whom I worked in Church Courts as on wider fields, was that the Church simply said to the State: "Hands off! We will not have your control. We will not take your money." This we thought was the best, infinitely the best, on the spiritual as well as on the civil side.

Thus I became a Disestablisher, and worse than that, a Disendower: mark that last. And so prejudices came along, perhaps prejudices on either side, and men said fiercely that I was the associate of agnostics, of atheists, of infidels. This last fell very flat. We remembered the apostolic rejoinder which McDowall of Alloa had taught us, that there were worse men than infidels. "He that provideth not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel." And those who knew me better—well, they didn't use the stupid taunt, or any taunt. Yet if you had known the Edinburgh of the time of which I speak, you would have realized what it meant to hold such views.

It was plain that politics and public life were looming in the near future for

Your ever loving

FATHER.

LETTER XIII

THROUGH THE 'EIGHTIES

Craigmyle.

August 18, 1920.

MY DEAR DAUGHTER ISABEL,

Tired of exciting epistles? Well, then, let me write you a restful letter.

These two months in town have been lonely enough in all conscience. Yet the judicial work was engrossing, and it had that interest which sprang from being an aftermath of the Great War.

Why did great vessels, for instance, steam through the darkness without lights, and add in this and many ways new perils to the deep? Why? Simply because they had to, by order of the Admiralty. They and their cargo were precious to our people. Hundreds of millions of pounds sterling were afloat on seas infested by German submarines. And the enemy had abjured the duties of capture and condemnation of ship and cargo as prize, and of the rescue of shipwrecked passengers and crew. Germany had abandoned the traditions of civilized war and made a new code of terror for the traffic of the sea.

To meet this code, a vast energy of watchfulness was developed by our fleet and a vast energy of heroism by our beloved sailormen: while from places like the Moray Firth, over there across the hills, there went one of the glories of the war—those great crews of mine-sweepers—

modest, patient, skilled, unwearied men, who by day and by night, in calm and in storm, showed the stuff of which patriotism is made and were the saviours of our country.

All these things, remember, were disciplined. Without that, all would have been lost. Thus there came stern, clever, minute Regulations of the Admiralty, supported alike by prudence, by the common interest, and by the instant sanction of force. Courses were changed: sailing orders were given for traversing great spaces of the sea which in normal times the prudent navigator would avoid: lights on shore and on shipboard were dowsed: vessels were put under convoy—taking their course and points of the compass from its commander. And that commander had the power and had the right to fire on, and to sink, offending, disobedient craft.

This vast new code or counter-code of the sea produced—as every new code does—a crop of problems of its own. So our dear bright friend Sir Samuel Evans earned a great renown, in shaping and applying old codes and new, and so he wore out his brilliant life. And to us in the Privy Council and the House of Lords there came difficulties neither few nor slight in solving puzzles, such as, for instance: which ship was to blame, or were both, for a collision when both were sailing without lights, or under convoy? Did the calamities spring from marine risks, or from warlike operations? and so on and so on; millions hanging in the balance of this way or that in the solutions, with sometimes great insurance corporations in the background, and always in the foreground the most brilliant of advocacy. And even as we fingered the bulky volumes, a hint, a reference, an allusion, would suddenly

touch a spring; and, away beyond law cases, and codes and codeless destruction, tragedies unfolded to imagination's eye and ear: the watchers' straining senses, the tearing of the torpedo in the entrails of the innocent, heroic merchantman, the wrestling with doom, and even

"The cry
Of some strong swimmer in his agony."

Then in a moment the spring recoiled and one was back again to duty and to legal issues. They were not tiresome, but they were troublesome and tough. And *that*, my dear, must be my excuse if I have failed to keep my promise to go on writing and telling you about things long past.

* * * * *

If I remember rightly, my recountings had not reached the period when you arrived on the scene to brighten all our lives. The legal years of the 'eighties have left few impressions which are vivid. I have no memory for drudgery. I suppose it would be possible by consulting fee-books and the like to make up a kind of record; but with all respect to some very, very eminent lawyer friends of mine, now deceased, what would be the use of that to any mortal? Was I earning more money from year to year? Were there fine solicitors standing by me? and had they good businesses? and had I compliments from this quarter or rebukes from that? Oh! dear, dear, the idea of any sensible man, even a father, taking the trouble to write down the like of that!

I do not deny that drudgery there was. Yes, indeed; but why not? There are two ways of it to a practising lawyer: either to treat work as duty, and to tackle it

accordingly, preserving equanimity and, if possible, a gaiety of mind; or to shirk it as an undeserved sentence of penal servitude. This last means "giving in," and I was not brought up that way. Whereas the other way —what happy inducements there were that I should follow it! "Fame," says Milton,

> "Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise
> To scorn delights and live laborious days."

There is something in that, no doubt, but not so much as men think. There are two passages in Burns which come nearer to the actual life of the barrister both north and south of the Tweed than most people unacquainted with the early struggles of such men would dream of:

> "To gather gear by every wile
> That's justified by honour."

That, of course, stamps character upon achievement. But the other is a tenderer and more inspiring wish:—

> "To mak' a happy fireside clime
> For weans and wife—
> That's the true pathos and sublime
> Of human life."

"Oh! hoity, toity," exclaim the miraculous persons, applauded by all sorts of affectation and the shallow mind. "We believe in genius; it is for such that the professions were made; but—stuff like that: never!" And, mark you: all the time they believe nothing of the sort; all the time they know that hard work, drudgery if you will, and drudgery manfully faced, that the rub is *there*.

For fame's sake? Well, perhaps so, in one case out of a score. And the other nineteen cases? What do

they say about them? Year in, year out, the steadfast shouldering of work and care, what was its secret? Ah! it is the Latin tag that tells the truth: "*Res angustæ domi.*" Yes, my dear, that is it. That is the secret, that is the spur. It accounts for the nineteen cases.

Upon the whole, the Bench of the United Kingdom has sufficient experience to know this, and so has sufficient imagination to feel that an advocate's task, faithfully performed and thus inspired, demands and deserves respect, consideration, sympathy. And for that reason, as well as for the sake of jurisprudence as the marshalled search for justice, it has always appeared to me that the treatment by a great Bench of the presentment of an uphill case by a great Bar is a study in those higher ethics where truth and courtesy are rich and shining things. And when again, either in the case of judge or counsel, to knowledge and fidelity are added culture and imagination, then indeed justice is justified of her children and jurisprudence comes to its own.

Sometimes through the 'eighties and through all that drudgery of which I have no memory, thoughts of that sort, in the watching and measuring of judicial procedure, drifted through the mind, and ideals were revealed. "Who is sufficient for these things?" I said it so often during those toilsome years; and I say so still.

Have I told you nothing in this letter? Have I drifted unwarrantably from what the philosophers call the objective to the subjective? Well, the mist is on the hills and great clouds are drifting down the valley from Braemar, and the grouse are too wild, and, as I have been sitting in the library, my memory has yielded little to recount from a decade which is blank. So the thoughts have

turned inward, and instead of description and action you have simply musing: musing, not on the outward bewildering events of to-day's bewildered world, but musing just as the thoughts deploy from the past and as they are felt in the quiet by a thankful heart.

Your loving

FATHER.

LETTER XIV

ENTER MR. GLADSTONE

Craigmyle.

August 25, 1920.

MY DEAR LASS,

When I wrote to you the other day about the blank of memory in the 'eighties, I was thinking of the law.

As to other things, and notably to public affairs—how far indeed from humdrum were they! Then was a time to be alive. Times of war fire the blood. But there are also crises when, in the political sphere, new ideas or a new summons seem to break over the nation like a cataract. Such a period was the first Midlothian campaign. The stir of such conflicts, their enthusiasms, their challenges and replies: of all these Midlothian was the centre. How vivid were the points and explosions and outbreaks of that splendid storm!

The judgment of men on such things undergoes, it may be, changes, even transformations: men's passions may then have warped their opinions: they may now think a different temperament more philosophical: they may even forget that opinions are also warped by shivering hesitations and recurrent chills.

I speak with intimate knowledge at least of Scotland during that period; but of course—thinking back to my own impressions—I should surprise many people by saying that the large outstanding facts were two. Two great

subjects of public life there were which were swept back again, by profound personal appeal, into the region of private interest, private responsibility and private duty. The first of these was finance. It was restored to a rank and level which it had not occupied since 1846. The second, of course, was foreign policy. It was restored to a rank and level which it had not occupied since 1853. Men were sternly shown how errors in either of those departments come home. Men felt then, as they do to-day, that it was so, that it must be so: but then, as now, there was need of a prophet, and, in that day, the prophet came.

At the time of the Corn Law Repeal men had been accustomed to think deeply of Budgets, of the foundations of economics. In the lowlands of Scotland, and in many very humble homes, these things and the views of Adam Smith were frequent topics of canvass. So also with foreign affairs. There remained even in the 'fifties which I can remember a serious concern with our Eastern policy, and not a little wondering whether Bright, mocked in the war fever of his time as a pro-Russian, had not been nearer than militarist passion to truth and to good sense. These were the wonder and concern of a large and faithful body of men—men accustomed to test life by ethical standards, men drilled in Christian doctrine. When statesmen ignore such men, politics are lowered.

Well, Isabel, it was to the sons and grandsons of such men that Mr. Gladstone made his first famous pilgrimage in the end of 1879. And when the new decade came along, it was ushered in among crowds of persons, of whom your father was one, who were moved, not to admiration alone and a swaying of the mind, but to a

deeper sense of the responsibility of the individual citizen as a sharer, however humble, in his country's destiny.

Take down, as I know you have done, Morley's "Life of Gladstone," and you will find all these things infinitely better said. Morley is a Stoic. A Stoic is a man who is afraid to let himself go. A man who is afraid to let himself go might be apt, if he were not so big a man as Morley—apt to become a poseur. But you see how, when the great biographer reaches the early Midlothian campaigns, such a temptation never came nigh those memorable days: his language grows warm and glowing.

But I am not quite sure that even Lord Morley understands the kind of seed-time that these speeches were for our younger manhood. In the case of myself and many, many more, we make no pretence or secret about it: they swept us after the sower into public life, to share, however humbly, the labours of the field.

Ah! how well, even in a few years, I was to know that to admire Mr. Gladstone, to revere him, to be convinced, moved, impelled, arrested, by him—to do or to be these things, was to be esteemed a weakling, or far worse, by most superior circles.

You have really no idea of the resentments which were felt in such quarters. No doubt this senselessness is passing away. The events of Ireland, for example, during the past few years have produced a visible revulsion of opinion in favour of Mr. Gladstone's patriotism, his true moderation, his immense sagacity, in that very chapter of his history for which the circles aforesaid held him heartily reprobate. The blindness of England! A policy of healing rejected, rejected again, rejected with contempt; then accepted, accepted helplessly, but accepted

too late! England's blindness! Yes: the misery of Ireland!

* * * * *

But I cut before the point. There was no Liberal Home Rule policy then. The greatest questions of the day were, as I say, foreign policy and finance. I am recalling the first day of the first Midlothian campaign.

I was seated in a far-away corner of the Edinburgh Music Hall—to the orator's extreme right, but with a good view of him and of the scene. The building was, of course, ridiculously small for the requirements of the occasion. Every chord—curiosity, enthusiasm, criticism, determination, watchfulness—every chord was tensely strung. General political interest appeared to be concentrated in that one room as from many nations of Europe and the four quarters of the English-speaking world; while to this the local spice was added of an attack upon the Buccleugh in his own citadel.

My own thoughts, I confess, took a turn of a more historical and personal kind; they were broken by each extra spasm of the surrounding excitement. We were about to see the man who in the darkest hours of Italian history had written those daring exposures of the horrors of Neapolitan prisons which had inspired with new life and hope the great patriots of Italy, and had driven King Bomba from his throne. Years had passed since Tennyson in "In Memoriam" had made Arthur Hallam's death immortal; and just in there, from under that gallery, there was coming to speak to us the intimate associate of Arthur Hallam. Here came the great survivor, the friend and coadjutor of Peel, of Lord John Russell, of Cobden and Cavour, and Mazzini.

There was a rustle of anticipation, and all faces turned towards the expected comer.

He had known the inside and the chair of the great offices of State—Board of Trade, Treasury and all.

Then there was a roar of cheering from the thousands in the streets outside, and the thoughts grew disturbed.

But still, was it not the very man who had risen from being the greatest of Chancellors of the Exchequer to being the greatest of Prime Ministers?

Well then, there he was, entering with a dignified, sure, but rather swift step, very calm and serene, but with a searching eye of fire. This is all that I can remember of it till the immense hubbub of the welcome sank, and, after a moment or two of hushed waiting, he rose to begin his vast task of the campaign.

The numerous portraits of Mr. Gladstone represent his exterior marvellously well, with more grip of the man in his solid greatness than is usually secured! I had more than one opportunity of observation of him at close quarters, and in a few days I shall send you some notes taken at the time—between 30 and 40 years ago—descriptive of his private conversational powers. But the truth is that for me neither portrait nor picture can, of course, ever reproduce that fact of marked significance which the memory tenaciously retains, which I may call "speech and the man."

I am recalling that fact now, that unusual *responsiveness of body to mind*, giving a vividness to description, a charm to narrative, a magnetic penetration to those feelings, whether of alarm, satisfaction, suspicion, pleasure or conviction, which he wished to convey from his own personality to that of the hearer. The hearer, the

beholder, was made in truth a listener with ears and eyes.

I need not say that the gestures which conveyed this responsiveness were aided by his muscular development. The head, massive as the portraits show, but deeper and broader behind than one would have thought when one watched the swiftness of its movements—the head was supported by broad and supple and, for an old man, very square shoulders; and the whole mass of the body upwards from the toes, and outwards to the finger-tips—everything moved or was rigid according to the command of the thought within. One quite peculiar gesture he had. He would stretch his arm to the right, then swiftly cover the back of his right hand with the palm of the left: as the other side of the picture opened he would swing the whole body to the left, distending the left arm and covering the left hand with the right. He pointed in this way the contrast which he argued; and he seemed to give to antithesis a living human shape.

Now that is quite enough for one evening. I was meaning to wind up with some lighter stuff about journalism and so on, but no: I confess that these old impressions still move me. The sun is setting over Lochnagar. This world is a very beautiful world. Good night.

Your own

TRUE THOMAS.

LETTER XV

THE ELOQUENT IN TALK

Craigmyle.

August 29, 1920.

ISABEL DEAR,

When I wrote to you last I mentioned a conversation that I had had with Mr. Gladstone, which I had written out at length. Well, I have been rummaging among old papers, and I have got the sheets.

Seldom or never have I taken down such things at the time. But friends, to whom I recounted the talk next day, were insistent that I should do so; and now I am glad that I did. You, however, will judge.

The first sheet of the paper is unfortunately missing. It stated the occasion and the setting. If I remember aright, the occasion was during, say, the third Midlothian campaign.

Mr. Gladstone was then staying with the Dean of Faculty Balfour, afterwards my dear chief as Lord Advocate, and thereafter, as Lord Kinross, Lord President of the Court of Session. The place of the dinner was Balfour's house at Rothesay Place, Edinburgh. The guests numbered about a dozen. I cannot remember their names, but they included prospective Liberal candidates, of whom I think I must have been one. The year probably 1890.

* * * * *

The notes proceed :—

Throughout the evening he was in great, almost turbulent spirits, and he broke out at once :

" Mrs. Balfour, I have to-day seen a wonderful sight. I said to Mr. Nelson ere I left him this afternoon that I envied him and wished that it were in my power to carry away with me that most marvellous and majestic view which he has from his dining-room window. There rises all the splendour of Arthur's Seat and there stand the Salisbury Crags. Wonderful ! "

All this ere we had left the drawing-room. As we filed downstairs—he leading the way—we heard his voice reverberating, the pauses being filled up by the ripple of repartee which his sprightliness evoked. This continued all through the dinner.

I sat below Mr. Herbert Gladstone, and looked at the aged statesman diagonally across the table. He dominated and enthralled everybody, the lightest modulations of his voice having a sonorous depth, and the mobility of his face, and in particular the blazing brilliance of his eyes in his serious moments, alternating in other moods with their apparent contraction to a needle's point glimmering with merriment, were a constant study.

Few of us, however, could catch much until the ladies retired, and then, indeed, began the serious business of the evening. " Perhaps," said Herbert to me, " you should take my place; you will want to hear my father talk." I gratefully assented, and we changed seats, I being then within four feet of his father.

As the conversation proceeded, this one peculiarity became marked, namely, that when a statement might have seemed too abstract, or a recollection too bare, he would

instantly give it body and dress by the phrase "*I will give you an instance*," the utterance of which would rivet the attention of everyone present.

The Dean alluded to his visit to Mr. Nelson's.

"Yes," said Mr. Gladstone, "I recollect well their father's place of business. You ascended to it from the Grassmarket, and following up essay after essay" (waving with his hand) "you heard at each storey the clang-clang of the coppersmith. I happen to have a most capricious memory. I will give you an instance: For there, in the year 1826, I well remember purchasing, from old Mr. Nelson, Isaac Barrow's Sermons in five volumes at the price of 26s."

The reminiscence led on to the subject of old Scottish literature; and Mr. Gladstone expressed the desire that greater effort should be made for its full and exact reproduction.

"No doubt," said the Dean, "it might require to some extent to be expurgated."

"Ah!" said Mr. Gladstone, "but I refer to its reproduction on a limited scale, for the use of some of your learned or Text Societies, rather than for popular consumption. And as for that matter of expurgation, a great change has come over the public taste even in comparatively recent times—of which I give you an instance. It would, I dare say, be hazardous to issue in our day for popular use a full edition of the works even of Richard Baxter—Richard Baxter the divine!"

"By the way," he added, "I do wonder that the translation of the entire Scriptures in verse by Zachary Boyd has never seen the light. I have a most capricious memory. It is now forty years ago since the late Dr.

Robert Lee conducted me through the University of Glasgow, and in the Library of that University he showed to me this work of Zachary Boyd. I opened it at the prophet Jonah, and I still remember the four lines which I read, and which, if you wish it, I will now repeat to you."

Of course we wished it. And then, with twinkling eyes and a fine mockery of gravity, he repeated these words:

> "Whin Jonah's whaul began to spew,
> Thinks Jonah, What's adae the noo?
> Here's nather room for coal nor cawnle,
> There's naething but fish-guts to haunle!"

After the explosion of laughter had subsided, we drifted from literature on to the subject of printing, when he startled us by saying, with much seriousness: "In the period which most of you will remember as the Jingo period, no less distinguished and able a man than the present Lord Derby said of the Montenegrins that they were a half-savage people. Now I will give you an instance. More than 400 years ago the Montenegrins were overwhelmed by the devastating power of the Turk, and were driven to their fastnesses in the mountains and the rocks; from which inaccessible fastnesses for the space of 400 years they have continued to wave the flag of freedom in the face of the Turk. Now, what did they carry with them to the mountains and the rocks? They carried with them their printing-presses; and this fourteen years before ever a printing-press was seen in Scotland! Thus far for Lord Derby's view that the Montenegrins are a half-savage people!"

About this stage Provost Cazenove was ushered in, and Mr. Gladstone and he were soon immersed in discussions about the Tractarian movement, and about

Oxford in the days—as old Dr. Cazenove amusingly admitted—before he knew it.

The conversation became more general, Mr. Gladstone leading on the subject of Dr. Döllinger and the late Catholic movement in Germany; this, again, raising the subject of the movement in Catholic circles against the restraints of the vows of celibacy in the priesthood. Upon this he remarked: "I remember having to spend—a good many years ago—some period in Paris; and there I had occasion to hear the attitude of Père Hyacinthe frequently discussed; and I am bound to confess that the position of society in Paris—not Roman Catholic society, not Protestant society, but *all* society—was one not of regret merely, but of positive disgust at the conduct of Père Hyacinthe."

"But," someone aptly remarked, "did not Luther say that unless he, a monk, married a nun, nobody would have the good sense to follow his precepts?"

"Ah," said Mr. Gladstone, with a shrewd smile, and his eyes glimmering, "Luther was a dare-devil sort of a fellow!"

As we left the dining-room, he paused until someone fetched him his black walking-cane, with the aid of which he ascended to the drawing-room, we painfully contrasting the weakness of his physical condition with the vigour and vivacity of his mental and conversational powers.

We were introduced to him in turn. As one of our number (who shall be nameless) was presented to him, with a head not large by any means, and gleaming in its baldness, Mr. Gladstone, moved by some fit, no doubt, of association of ideas, got the conversation on to the subject of heads and their varying sizes. "I am told," said he,

" that the largest size of heads to be found in these islands is in Aberdeen. Mr. Cooper, of the *Scotsman*—in those days (with a smile) when the *Scotsman* pursued a sound and sensible policy—related to me an anecdote. He himself has a large head, so large that upon one occasion no size in the front department of a hatter's shop could be found to fit it; whereupon the hatter called (in Mr. Cooper's hearing) to his assistant in the back shop, ' Jimmy, bring me the *Aberdeen size!* ' "

I was anxious to have his opinion of some of the great lawyers of his time, and practically he himself led on to the theme by inquiries as to literary pursuits by members of the legal profession. I said to him that, although the prejudice against these was dying hard, I thought it was unquestionably dying. For one thing, citing from my own experience, I was aware that the present Lord President (Inglis) always relished the citation of the opinions of Lord Jeffrey, expressed as these were in good literary form.

Being thus on the subject of the Edinburgh reviewers, I asked him pointedly, " Mr. Gladstone, did you know Lord Brougham? "

" Lord Brougham! " said he with much animation, " he was one of my intimate personal friends."

Then, tapping with his fingers the end of the sofa on which he was seated, and speaking to me standing by his side, in terms of what I may describe as enthusiastic animation, he launched forth into a series of vivid descriptions of men and events.

" I am told," said I, " that Scarlett was Brougham's most formidable antagonist, and a man of the greatest persuasive powers."

"Well," said he, "if you refer to Parliament, I do not agree with you. I will tell you what Scarlett's power was: he knew the mind of a jury. I will give you an instance. My father was a keen business man, and he had a litigation at Westminster, and Scarlett was his counsel. My father's antagonist was in the witness-box, and was being cross-examined by Scarlett, and my father —a keen business man—desired that a certain question in particular should be put to his opponent. He accordingly wrote the question down on a piece of paper and handed it to Scarlett, who perused it, and, turning down his thumb (you know how these things are done), put it on one side. But my father was not to be beaten, and he accordingly again wrote his question upon another slip of paper, and again handed it to Scarlett, who thereupon put the question and *received a most damaging answer;* upon receiving which he turned round and said to my father, 'Where are you now, Mr. Gladstone?'"

"No," he said, "not Scarlett, but in Parliament I should rather reckon that Sir William Follett was the greatest; and about that time Parliament was never so rich in great lawyers. Five of them, all great, I remember sitting on the one front bench."

"We think," said I, "judging from our very limited experience in Scotch appeals, that Lord Chancellor Cairns stands at the head of the list of these Englishmen."

"Sir Hugh Cairns!" he said. "Yes, I have heard great lawyers in England discuss that topic, and I found the general opinion to be that among them Sir Hugh Cairns stands first, and Jessel—Jessel the Jew—stands second."

"Of course," said I, "Westbury——"

"Westbury!" cried he. "I consider that Lord Westbury was a man of so acute and penetrating an intellect that it mattered not to him one rush whether the cause which he espoused was right or wrong. I will give you an instance. You are not old enough to remember the first China War. We had a debate of five days upon the subject in the House of Commons, with the result that we threw Palmerston out, and on appeal to the country, the country threw us out.

"Sir Richard Bethell was then Attorney-General, and he and the Solicitor-General of the day were called in to a Cabinet Council to advise on the question whether the war could possibly be defended. The Solicitor-General—a plain, simple man—thought that it was possible that it might be defended; but Sir Richard Bethell announced to the Cabinet emphatically his opinion that by no human ingenuity could that war be defended. Well, as I said, the debate came on in the House of Commons, and on the evening of the third day the adjournment had been moved. I was sitting on the front bench, while the Clerks were arranging their papers on the table, and the Speaker in my hearing, as he passed from the Chair, said to Sir Erskine May, the Clerk of the House, 'What a remarkably able speech was that just delivered by Sir Richard Bethell!' That speech was in defence of the first China War, which, in the private consultations of the Cabinet, he had advised by no human ingenuity could possibly be defended!"

By this time I, standing in front of him, had been joined by others of the company, and, in short, the animation of his utterances, and the attractiveness and grace of his presence and gesture, had gathered a circle about

him. No sign of lassitude was apparent, although by this time the clock was on the stroke of eleven, and he had had a day, and days, of stupendous exertion. But he must be protected against even our delighted importunity: Mrs. Gladstone quietly slipped in amongst us, and her husband was whisked off to his own apartments, and the pleasant company dispersed.

How lifeless and bald must any reproduction in black and white be of such conversation! The magic and music of it, its charm and grace, its range of feeling from volcanic earnestness to the tenderest humour, all these, alas, no skill can reproduce, no words describe. That is all that our settled recollection can declare; at the immediate moment our minds were in a storm of excitement.

As I left the hall, I was seized by both shoulders by another of the guests, and shaken violently to the refrain, "'Did you ever, ever, ever in your life hear the like of that?"

* * * * *

I have given you the notes just as they are; and thus they end. What think you of it? Does it interest you? Does it move you? Anyhow, it is a true picture, drawn at the very time, by

Your loving

FATHER.

LETTER XVI

THE SARCASM CARVED IN STONE

Craigmyle.

September 1, 1920.

My Isabel,

I have a confession to make to you. I cannot truthfully deny that newspapers *did* influence me, and sometimes helped to shape my opinion, in these early days. You know very well how differently you were brought up, and how journalistic opinion was never taken among you at its face value. Had it been otherwise, our family life would have been a poor flustered affair.

My complete disconnexion from society entanglements may have had something to do with an outspokenness which gave anxiety to friends and was received with—well, disapproval, by the other sort. But when day after day, week after week, or even year after year, the same familiar tags—contempt, sophism, attack, and those lower forms of hostility which are known in the lower quarters—when these were at their oftenest and their worst, they provoked only a shameless hilarity among a family of jolly unbelievers. They applied even to that our standing family maxim: "Turn every trouble into an adventure."

But, as I say, it was different when I was young. To be "in the papers" either for good or for bad was a serious affair. This kind of feeling lasted till I was

grown up. It was so for hundreds of thousands of Scotchmen. It is so no longer. A kind of emancipation took place from the power of the Press and a great emergence of the right of private judgment. This independence of journalistic leading-strings has continued. It is greater in Scotland than even in the North of England, greater far than in the South. And I should put Scotland at least forty years in advance of London in this regard; for London is the lowest in the scale of moral misfortune—that of being content, and even of wishing, to have its thinking done for it.

What caused the change? Well, it had no doubt to do with the Home Rule split. But most of all it was in the world of hero worship that the shock occurred. Here is an instance at hand.

A very leading paper in the East of Scotland was the *Scotsman*. It had been conducted for a long period with such ability as to have become a real pioneer not only of political liberalism, but of religious toleration.

We were most of us younger fellows very willing to study public affairs in quarters more settled and scientific —especially in economics and history as well as scholarship—than the columns of a daily paper. Still, water wears the rock. And when Mr. Gladstone came to Midlothian, his disciples numbered thousands who had been so deluged with praise of him that hero worship faintly expresses their state of mind. The adulation of him by the *Scotsman*—"adulation" is quite a feeble and inadequate term—the adulation of him in those columns was so steady, so lavish, so indiscriminate, that it required a real cleverness to conceal its being overdone. Such was

the state and such was the influence of the Press in that quarter in the first half of the 'eighties.

In the second half of the 'eighties all was changed. The hero incarnate had become something else incarnate. All that was bright had turned to darkness, and the same man had suddenly been transmuted from the preacher of righteousness to the prophet of evil; the sincere in him had become sinister; the good in him had become evil; there had been nothing like it since the fall of Adam, only, owing to its dangerous accomplishments, this was worse than original sin. So where there had been admiration of the man there was now contempt, where there had been streams of adulation there now ran rivers of contumely.

Was this consistent or inconsistent? Was it right or wrong? That, my lady, is not the point I am pressing. The point is this: that the swift and tremendous change from the one extreme to the other put it into the heads of many, many citizens that both extremes were wrong, and that such leading was only for the blind. I am not talking, mark you, of that huge body of Scotchmen who resented the change on its merits, and still revered Mr. Gladstone. They did so now indeed with a new affection as they watched how finely he bore adversity of opinion and the buffetings of fortune. But I am referring to that far from negligible body of men who realized afresh a capacity and indeed a duty to do without Press domination, and who became steeled in favour of independence of mind. That class has grown, grows, and will grow. Even London may come along: the dear big Babylon will be none the worse.

As to my own case, that is neither here nor there.

After I entered public life I became the object of the affable attentions of the paper I have mentioned, and of its satellite which revolved in the same orbit. As the years went on the iteration grew laughable, and being one-sided—for I never took any notice—except possibly on an early opportunity to go one worse—it became tiresome, and after that a kind of testimonial; for if I had earned approbation in that quarter it would have lost me votes.

Then was I not in good company? Think of Dr. Rainy, the ablest, the wisest, and the most truly Christian man of affairs whom I have ever intimately known out of Parliament. One's own case did not matter; but to think of such treatment, from such a source, of such a man! I once spoke to Dr. Rainy on the subject, making no secret of my own sense of what was going on. The learned Principal read me a lesson in philosophy. Half gravely, half humorously, with that wonderful play of eyelids which seemed to tremble towards the distance, he said: "Well, of course, it is a pity that Mr. Cooper is a man who is so largely governed by hostilities!"

Mr. Cooper was the editor of the paper, a man of talent, clever rather than wise, a Roman Catholic Englishman, with no knowledge of the essentials of Scottish history or character; and his sympathies and antipathies were worked indefatigably and according to plan. The admirable apparatus of his paper enabled him to gratify these at will, and no doubt this temptation led him at times too far.

I was wrong in saying that I took no notice. I once did. There was a case being tried in Edinburgh—an unjust attempt (as I remember it) to extract damages from

a builder for a workman's own fault or mistake. There were lots in it about scaffoldings, beams, and so on. I had been possibly sent for from London to defend the case, and as I walked up the North Bridge to Court, something interested me.

The present fine buildings there had just been erected —among them the handsome premises of my journalistic supervisors. The jury soon got on the wrong tack altogether, and seemed to resent the defence: one had to get them back to good sense by the way of good humour. So in addressing them I made a detour.

"There are strange freaks, Gentlemen," said I, "in Edinburgh buildings. If any of you go down, for instance, to the North Bridge, you will have a treat." By this time there were symptoms that the jury, and Lord McLaren too, who was presiding over them, were expecting fun. "You will see there," said I, "an architectural freak: *a sarcasm carved in stone.*" A bit of a pause. "You will see a Figure, holding the Torch of Truth—over the *Scotsman* office!"

There was a little scuffle and racket, of course, but all went well. And after the case was over a good few of the auditors, including jurors and listening juniors, went home *via* the North Bridge!

Dear! Dear! What liberties one took!

Your very own

TRUE LOVE.

LETTER XVII

THE HARRY VANE POINT

Craigmyle.

September 5, 1920.

PLEASE, ISABEL DEAR,

Here is a Sabbath morning, peaceful, serene, lovely. I have been wondering in my own mind whether perhaps I have not been failing to show forth truly that great decade of the 'eighties. Or rather whether I have not been omitting, for you as well as for myself, its deepest significance.

I mean this. It is true that professional work was arduous, severe, unremitting; treadmill work, if you think of it merely in itself, which is what nobody should do who has the healthy mind. It is true that the affairs of State came at that time rushing like a great wind into very arid places. One's thoughts were swept out of the narrow and self-centred round; exhilarations came in that ample range, but with them came, sometimes conflict, sometimes dust.

Yet that is not the whole truth. We must be fair and candid with each other; there was that something else of which I wrote to you some time ago.

I understand that there is a mighty difference, as scientific men point out, between the effect of irregular waves and regular waves in the world of sound. The one is noise, the other is music. It is so in life. Effort,

struggle, exhilaration: what shall abate the noise—what shall lay the dust—what shall bring the pulsations, now wild and now lethargic, into rhythm? Will insouciance do it, or abandon? Will health do it or will stoicism? No! no! none of these. "There is a world elsewhere." That is the secret. It is the consciousness of *that* that gives hope its scope and faith its power. As I was brought up to believe, it was in that consciousness that the parallels of principle were laid. That it is which is the great regularizer. And so the movements alike of the inner and the outward world are transmuted from noise to a music of life.

You know very well about these things; and I am only putting them down to show you that I am not forgetting them, that after having reached the allotted span I still most verily believe in them, and that indeed to leave them out of the account would not be honest. Nay, I feel that they are more widely, far more widely, making to great masses of men a true motive power of life than is commonly supposed. Nowadays, of course, it is an affectation of the hour to play Gallio, to deny with a wink or a smile all place for things divine in the springs of human action, and to exhibit a sham and shabby shrewdness by asking at every turn of a man's life what game he is up to. This, of course, is a belittling of life to the critic's measure, and—but you—well, to business.

The upshot of it all is that in the 'eighties the things whose interest attracted me outside of the law were not only the affairs of the State, but also, and quite naturally, and as a matter of course, the affairs of the Church, in that sense, wide and tolerant and true, for which the term should stand.

The position of Scotland as to this was distinct. No doubt in forty years that position may have shifted. As what has not? May not one cherish catholicity, toleration, the love for and belief in more light—light from all the width of heaven?

> "What custom wills, in all things should we do't,
> The dust on antique time would be unswept,
> And mountainous error be too highly heaped
> For truth to overpeer."

More than any others that fine body of men I worked with felt these truths, while cherishing with a deep loyalty "the fundamentals."

But do not forget that the Scotland of those times—to the circle of which I speak—stood thus; and if you don't want this disquisition, then don't read it, but be pleased to let me ease my conscience in describing that part of the life of myself and thousands of us in that day by just writing it down:—

Scotland was the home of Presbyterianism, that is to say, it was democratic, from the keel to the masthead. The organizing genius of Calvin and the masterful intellect of Knox had made the whole body of the people inheritors in a personal sense, not only of the principle of equality of rights, but of those imperative duties which that equality implied. So the clergy were kept, so to speak, in their proper place. They were teaching elders, and no more. The doctrine of apostolic succession was neither believed in historically nor was it felt to be consistent with Presbyterian equality, putting as it did fellow-men in a position of ascendancy and privilege; whereas such ascendancy and privilege should and could alone be won or kept in any Christian community

by character and faith and moral worth. So men, with the kind of upbringing I had, naturally felt that as manhood came to them its responsibility of witness-bearing led them into Church life and work. There was no ecclesiasticism about it.

Therefore one worked away as an office-bearer, visiting, teaching in the schools, and all the rest of it, in that little Presbyterian world into which you, like the other dear ones, were baptized. This led one in time into the so-called Church Courts, the chief of these being that lively, independent, capable, fearless, and altogether lovable body called the Synod.

It numbered from 1,000 to 1,200 men; clergy and laity equally represented, every congregation all over Scotland sending its minister and an elder. If ever incongruity had a chance, surely you might say it was there; they came from a country as divided in sentiment as it was by straits and seas. But this is a singularity of Scotland itself—that that variety of geographical distribution has been accompanied by a surprising solidarity of belief.

It has been often noted in things political. It arose from things religious. Men were welded together by a common faith, and if the State and politics tried to concuss that, there were in old days rebellions and scaffolds and cruelties and killing times, and in these often and often again Dissent stood side by side with Duty. Dissent had gone through various stages and evolutions; and though a gentler and more insidious code of conformity made easy became, of course, the vogue, the Synod may be said to have represented the consolidated forces of all Presbyterianism outside, deliberately and of set principle outside, connexion with the secular power.

This connexion was in full force with the Established Church; the same connexion was historically visible in the Free Church, which remained in a perplexity between the dead past and the living present—a perplexity for which it suffered a most cruel punishment. Our own good Church was neither in the Establishment nor did it make the slightest claim or wish or pretence of right to be in it. Its view was simply that State Endowments were a deadening and deplorable affair, and that State control was insufferable to an institution which ought to be moved alone by the living Spirit. That was it: guidance and direction were there.

Evangelical? Yes; come along, good old word! "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ," said St. Paul, and so said they. That was their Apostolical succession.

There were two great nights of their annual session—one on the relations of Church and State, and in this they justified and fortified their position, making clear the inevitable logic of toleration. The other was on the spread of the Evangel in accordance with the command. Thirty or forty years ago that was a brace of topics which drew great, intensely interested, deeply earnest audiences.

Had I thought that either cause would suffer by the transaction of union with the Free Church I should never have put my hand to that great work which was accomplished as the century drew to its close. Have these causes suffered? Well! who knows? The great Christian promises, commands, duties, stand as before, leading, as I believe, to the same great conclusions. All is in the best of Hands.

More than any other assembly I have ever known, the Synod resembled in the quality of its debates the Parlia-

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ment at Westminster. Yet the former had some advantages. It had no leaders, no parties, no coalitions. Every subject was tested by good sense, sound knowledge, and gospel truth. No other leadership did they want. One would have thought that disintegration would have ensued. Not a whit. As there were no parties, there was nothing to fall asunder.

So aspirants to leadership were few. One or two Doctors of Divinity I knew, whose ambitions in that direction were quickly dowsed. Yet the real head-and-shoulders men could not, of course, be concealed. Two of them I vividly recall. They were singularly unlike in personal appearance. The one tall, loosely built, yet massive—a great body, surmounted by a noble, truly noble, snowy head. The other was small, compactly built; long upper lip; face closely shaven; head closely cropped; in no way—as the Scotch say—"kenspeckle." The one ample, rich and flowing, Ciceronian in style; the other logical, compendious, pungent, Tacitian. Yet both of them living embodiments of power, of a true modesty, of a courage undaunted, and within—a heart of golden charity. Having known them, I say this, not of one but of both.

No mean men these, as teachers, as debaters. Both were Principals in their time. Cairns had long years before his death been offered the Principalship of the University of Edinburgh; but till after his death it was never known.

I was meaning to tell you of those influences and associations which in the affairs of Church and State moved me ere I was called to the parliamentary arena. And I have begun with the former. Later and larger

events in the ecclesiastical sphere—they can wait till another occasion.

Now for the affairs of State. For I suppose you *do* want to hear about the approach to Westminster?

But it is late. Not to-night. Forgive the ardour of some of these old remembrances. But I am trying to tell you things as I felt them.

Your Sabbath-breaking

FATHER.

LETTER XVIII

A SPORTING AFFAIR

Craigmyle.

September 7, 1920.

DEAR LASS ISABEL,

The 'eighties are over. Their experiences—hard in the law, serious in the Church, inspiring in the State; with literature a steady consolation, and family life a support and a delight—were these not richer far, for the purposes of life, than accumulations of wealth?

The inevitable consequence ensued. Just as in youth the prescribed bounds had been broken, so it was in manhood. Much had to be risked again, but this time the risks were broader and more serious. Work-a-day business to be torn to fragments; Edinburgh forsaken for Westminster, during most of the working year. Was one justified in applying even to that the jolly family maxim —turn every trouble into an adventure?

I own to you that these thoughts did sizzle in the mind. The sweet counsellor by my side never flinched. In 1890 I accepted the invitation to become Liberal, or rather Radical candidate for the Border Burghs.

It was difficult country, and the pace was fast. Had anything broken, had even the saddle-girths been slackened by a single hole, I should have been unhorsed. But it was the Scott country. The men were born fighters; loyalty was not a passive but an active quality, and on

each side of politics loyalty was true as steel. A sure seat? No! No! Just the very opposite. A sporting affair. Of adventure there was such a spice as would have tempted the most austere to a bout of betting.

On the one side there was the Liberal tradition. Sir George Trevelyan had been member for eighteen years, rendering conspicuous political service by his faithful advocacy of the extension of the franchise, and making by his literary achievements even his parliamentary pedestal famous. His majorities had run into thousands. Who was I to think of succeeding such a man, or of ever in the world being not only his parliamentary but his ministerial colleague?

Yet I was to know the warmth of his friendship and the steady kindness of his encouragement. Rummaging among papers the other day I found this letter. Read it. Can you wonder that I love and venerate its author?

"*Welcombe,*
"*Stratford-on-Avon.*
"*February* 11, 1897.

"DEAR SHAW,

"I have been following your energetic peregrinations. The fact is that it is an extraordinary thing to see anyone who really enjoys politics, and yet understands their higher aspect and holds his opinions as a creed. It has been a great element in my life for some years past to get some electricity from a contact which fortunately was a pretty frequent one. I look back to our relations with unmixed satisfaction, and forward to enjoying the friendship which has resulted from them.

* * * * *

"With our united kind remembrances to Mrs. Shaw,

"I remain,

"Very sincerely yours,

"G. TREVELYAN."

Following Trevelyan came Alexander Laing Brown, who sat from 1885 till 1892. You know well enough about him, so far as his conversational gifts and his extraordinary powers of memory are concerned. But of his public efforts you know nothing. Well; he was quite the most powerful helper of Mr. Gladstone in all Scotland—worth a dozen of platform supporters and hundreds of the hanger-on species. He was shortish of stature and spare of build. He had a fine and lofty forehead, a gleaming eye, a good modulation of voice; and he also had, when he passed out of his humorous exordium, that true orator's strength—a word of power from a heart of flame. This will seem to you exaggeration; but it is not. I have seen him over and over again dip into the literary treasures that were always to his hand, and—for he was an ardent Browningite—clinch both argument and appeal by vivid lines from his favourite author. This man was resigning, and so the vacancy. I always loved him; he was my friend, eloquent, assiduous, unfailing, from my first contact with the Burghs till the last.

I remember well one occasion on which the three of us—Trevelyan, Brown and I—strode, back and forward, from end to end of the Terrace of the Houses of Parliament, deep in an animated talk. Our good friends of the other persuasion—not a few of them—watched us kindly but with a grim smile. I interpreted their question to be:—"What new manœuvre are these rebels of Radicals discussing?" Why, my dear, they were discussing the literature and ballads of the Borders, Brown's knowledge and memory of these far excelling all of ours. But I must get back to my story.

These were the pros. Now for the contras.

Alas! Trevelyan had forsaken Mr. Gladstone and followed Mr. Chamberlain. And so in the contest of 1885 his thousands had melted away. Brown, called upon at a moment's notice to save Gladstonian Liberalism and to defend Home Rule for Ireland, had stepped into the breach, ousted him from the citadel, destroyed his majority, and kept the pass by the narrow figure of thirty votes.

It was no doubt true that, after the failure of a certain Round Table Conference, Trevelyan had come back to the old party fold. But did he bring back any Border Unionists with him? Not one. They were obstinate; some of them furious; and all of them chafed at the lead of the Burghs being held against them for seven years by thirty votes. They held a common talk that the Burghs were since at least 1888 misrepresented, and that the Chamberlain policy was now in the ascendant.

They had the singular good fortune of having as their prospective candidate Mr. Chamberlain's own son. Here would have been a shrewd blow—Austen to restore Chamberlainism in the constituency of Trevelyan who had deserted it! Enough to make every Unionist long for the day of battle. I should tell you also that Mr. Austen Chamberlain on his own merits was even then a singularly attractive personality, and displayed the beginnings of those high qualities which have since made him so capable and effective in various Ministries of State. No one could fail to wish such a man well.

Unfortunately at the last moment he chose a surer seat in Worcestershire. There he won handsomely. The Burghs selected a worthy ex-Provost, a manufacturer of

woollens, who sturdily fought for local interests and the Unionist party ticket.

Yet the contest was strenuous—what they call "stirring." Great audiences, speeches every evening; heckling galore. Yes, indeed, heckling, that great "popular educator" north of the Tweed. Not infrequently I spoke for an hour and was heckled for an hour and a quarter. On the part of the constituency, extraordinary knowledge, great quickness of apprehension, quickness of tongue, love of a tussle, and loyalty to the game.

On the part of the candidate, whom you know, what was his style and line? Madame, the question is improper! Are they not recorded in the Chronicles of etc., etc., etc.? When you stand for Parliament, dig into those speeches for curiosity's sake. Mines of wisdom!

One story I may tell you which I fear we owe to the invention of some kindly rascals of the Parliament House. You have heard in my last letter about my interest in affairs ecclesiastical. In former epistles also those elements have appeared which moved me in warm support of the popular Radical creed. And even in the cradle you must have heard the reverberations of the Tweed controversy. All this was compended by the clever diarist aforesaid as follows:

"I like Maister Shaw," said a Galashiels voter, speaking to a friend in the Peebles train. "I like Maister Shaw. You see, sir, he's

For God;
And the People;
And Free Fishing!"

I was often chaffed about this programme; and once I

allowed that the best of all free fishing was "free fishing in preserved waters." This last quip never came out. The programme stood. It won. The majority rose from 30 to 365.

And so behold in the dusk of an evening of July, 1892, at the door of Abercromby Place, a cab heaped up with luggage. Within the dwelling a grave-faced father in the nursery upstairs kissing the children one by one; and then, after a parting serious glance at the bare library desk, from which all the briefs had been sent back, he enters the cab with the dear companion and boards the train to King's Cross *en route* for Westminster. That familiar route! How often was he to traverse it, by day and by night, during the next seventeen years!

Your affectionate

FATHER.

LETTER XIX

A FRONT-BENCH MAN WITH A BACK-BENCH MIND

Craigmyle.

September 10, 1920.

My own Isabel,

The weather has been broken and the shooting infrequent; so what to do in these days but to keep on answering your commands?

You remember how Barrie quaintly describes a discussion among his villagers, as to what could be the use of a bit of ground for a front garden? The conclusive defence for it was, I think, that it was a place where "a body could gae back and fore, composing his mind"! As I paced to and fro on the terrace this morning, the recollection of the saying caused a ripple of laughter in the mind. Ah! what a genius that of Barrie's, that gift of bequeathing a pleasure to the memory, of causing a laughter in the mind!

Where was I? What I meant to be at was this, that looking westward and seeing the clouds drifting from Lochnagar to Cloch-na-ben, I was thinking of you, and of the past, and was "composing my mind." So here goes for another letter.

The Home Rule Parliament of 1892 to 1895 was pretty largely a new Parliament. What was my predominant feeling? Well, to tell the plain truth, it was one of bewilderment. This was shared by, I should say, two

hundred of us; but in my case the bewilderment lasted for at least a year. During that year there I sat, interested, watchful, gradually absorbing the spirit of the procedure, not in the least bored, scrupulously silent.

The time was well filled up. There was the daily letter home. Also a little cargo of letters to constituents, helping this one here and that one there, and learning a great patience in the removing of doubts and the soothing of disquiet. Now and again cases for legal opinion dropped from the skies.

I made the orthodox maiden speech, of course, and in the orthodox manner. That is to say, it was a dismal failure. I know about these things; years afterwards I repeated the experiment in the Lords; dismal failure again! Only one spark of consolation in the Commons—Mr. Gladstone, probably remembering our conversation at the Dean's, stayed in the nearly empty House and into his dinner-hour to hear me, and, as he left the chamber, gravely bowed his acknowledgments. It was little, but the courtesy consoled.

Then one day, in an excited and a crowded House, with a division impending on the Home Rule Bill, in which every vote counted and which might mean the fall of the Government, I felt irresistibly called to interpose. The question at issue was very technical—about keeping up the procedure of a Petition of Right before you could sue the Crown. I think it was Carson—a man even then of marked acuteness and vigour—who raised the puzzle; and he and Mr. Balfour made the pace in style. To them replied Rigby—worth any ten of us, but oh! so ponderous—and he and Mr. Gladstone between them seemed to have ransacked the world for precedents.

It so happened that in some law case or other I had had to investigate the topic. I said to Sir Joseph Leese sitting next me:

"Leese, I know about this; should I say anything?"

Leese was in excitement like all the rest.

"What?" said he. "Look at the House; crammed up. How dare you think of it?"

Before he had finished I was on my feet. A kind of curiosity stilled the tumult for a moment. Mellor, the Chairman, didn't even know my name, so he just pointed to me with his finger. My theme was very simple. People had been wandering all over the world for precedents; would the House like to hear of one nearer home? If it would suffer two sentences I would tell them how we managed north of the Tweed. Mr. Gladstone swung round for a moment at this, looked at me, and thereafter boomed out his "Hear, hears" as I proceeded. The House and Government were making much ado about nothing. In Scotland we did without Petition of Right altogether. Any Government department making a contract had to answer that contract and could be so compelled in the Courts. If this cumbrous and archaic procedure were forced on Ireland, I should advise my Irish friend to get rid of it at the quickest.

The House of Commons does really like to have a new point, or a new fact, stated briefly and by one who knows. And it listened to me as if it was getting that, just when it most wanted it, that is to say, in the dreariness of Committee. So there was far more made of the thing than it deserved.

I am only telling you this for a reason which is coming in a little. Next day Sir Charles Russell, the Attorney-

General, came to me with a message from Mr. Gladstone. Alas! Sir Charles Russell soon wended his way to the Bench as Lord Chief Justice. And alas! Mr. Gladstone's place was soon empty and we saw the grand figure no more.

Readjustments for the great, too great void, had to take place. Lord Rosebery reigned in his stead as Prime Minister; Sir William Harcourt leading the Commons.

Too little has been made of that Harcourt leading. It was in circumstances as difficult, as we afterwards knew, as ever fell to the lot of any party representative; but it was quite conspicuous in force and argumentative power, quite unwearied, quite fearless. I speak of him perhaps as a partisan. Many times he called me to his side on the front bench and we exchanged stories, he asking for the latest in Scotch. One time—but there you are; I am cutting before the point. What right had I on the front bench?

Why! that is just it. That accidental little speech had put a point of Scotch law right into the heart of an imperial debate. By this time also—for I so loved the place and all about it—my friends were numerous in all parts of the House. In the smoking-room, chess, with even wild opponents like Sir Ellis Ashmead Bartlett; and draughts—a very serious affair—with Fenwick, the miners' high-principled, burly Labour leader; and with McGhie (I hope the good McGhie is still to the fore), a Home Rule Irishman, the best draught player I ever saw, and with a head so stocked with Scotch literature and with Burns as to make me ashamed.

As for the Scotch members, they were, as usual, steady

going, but a little slow in the pace; and with them there used to be much joviality. About six-and-twenty of us lived in Queen Anne's Mansions—that vast ten- or twelve-storey disfigurement which overhangs St. James's Park and the Wellington Barracks. To get there from Westminster we had to pass, not the palatial Broadway as it now is with its Central Buildings, but the Aquarium and a rather slummy quarter. One night—the House then sat regularly till twelve—we were companioning each other to the Mansions. As usual with me through early life, my intimates were nearly all my seniors. One of these, as we passed up the dark quadrangle of those gloomy towering Mansions, used to say sepulchrally, "Surely, surely, God never made man to live in a dwallin' like this!" But the barrack has stood, and it thrives.

So the little stone which had been thrown from Scotch law into the great waters of debate was from the hand of one who had hosts of friends, and the act was known to have had approval from the highest quarters.

I wonder whether these things had their effect in a certain emergency which was about to occur, whether they helped or hindered, when a certain totally unexpected vacancy occurred. I wonder.

You shall hear of that in a minute, but meantime be good and listen to this.

These early days of sympathetic intercourse with the back benches, and that kind of understanding comradeship, had this effect. I got a new and quite certain experience of that part of Parliament which is its least showy, most serviceable, most modest, most genuine part. The cheap sneer at politics, at Parliament, at public spirit

itself, that you may hear wherever selfishness is the practice of men! But that got its answer then and there with me for life. The front benches—newspapers and party adulations and history will attend to them. But of the back benches here is my testimony.

I saw around me men, literally in crowds, men mostly in middle life or over, men with no axe to grind, no hope, no expectation, no wish, except that they might be privileged to repay in service for others the fortune which had smiled upon their private affairs. This breed of men is the strength of these islands. May it last for ever, distinguishing our country from all less happier lands. Do not let cynicism cheat you of the belief in this sound, modest, wholesome strength; it is true: I loved the back benches for it. And so in after years my friends came nearer the point than they dreamed, of what I really wanted to be. They dubbed me a front-bench man with a back-bench mind.

Do not let me lead you to think that there were not grave and perplexing anxieties. That would be make-believe. The fact is that public affairs were in a state of high tension; the Liberal majority was barely workable; so slender was it, that even a few days' absence from London was hardly to be had. Add to this that less and less grew the chances of that long winter recess, in which had lain my expectation of earning my living in the practice of my profession.

Yet somehow the clouds seemed to have always the silver lining. Life, which was now on a broader and a better scale for me, could not surely be put on a narrower or a worse for those dearer than life. A little fanciful, perhaps; but it was a faith.

Then suddenly, as in a thunderclap, the back-bench period came to an end. Without a note or hint of warning, Mr. Asher, one of the greatest advocates in the United Kingdom, resigned the post he held, and I was appointed Solicitor-General for Scotland.

Your quite exhausted

FATHER.

LETTER XX

THISTLE AND SHAMROCK

Craigmyle.

September 17, 1920.

DEAR RESPECTED,

Yesterday I was planted in a high butt in the Forest of Birse. I was doing all the things no decent shot should do. I was gazing on range after range of mountains beautiful beyond description, purple near at hand, blue in the far distanced outline, while overhead was the saffron sky streaked with bars of crimson and of grey. I sang out the words from Marmion which you know. "To fight for such a land?"

The reply came from the grouse:

"Whr-r-r," said they, as they suddenly streaked by—with a most mortifying immunity. There you are! Altogether a bad business.

Anyhow, I was thinking about you, and of what to tell you in my letter to-day. Here goes.

I was speaking about Asher suddenly resigning the Solicitor-Generalship for Scotland. Asher's case in some respects was a very sad one. He was a living bulwark to the cause of every client he had. His presence, forensic manner, industry and convincing power, all of the very first order. His aloofness was no doubt against him. Parliament did not know him. He was in it, but not of it. I think that this was a deplorable misfortune.

With his gifts, he would have adorned Parliament and moulded the history of his country.

Balfour, his senior by a month or two, was of a different mould. Asher boldly and coldly bludgeoned his antagonist; Balfour with a winning gesture, and with infinite courtesy, stilettoed him. The latter's memory for case law was prodigious; he had no less industry than the former, but he had a quicker resource, a more adroit persuasiveness and greater accomplishments. Asher drove the judges along the road of reason; Balfour piped to them, and they danced happily, and came his way.

A great pair. In one sense they were too near, and their equality made the constant seniorship in office of the one a disconcerting circumstance. At least, it may have been so. Anyhow, Asher, who, under a massive exterior, had not a robust constitution, resigned office.

Semper paratus: ready, aye ready. Yes, of course; just so. But, my dear child, when you get either a sudden lift or a knock-down blow from the totally unexpected, fine maxims get a shake. There was more of that kind of upsetting coming along for your astonished parent, as you will presently see. Meantime, Lord Advocate Balfour was a rare treasure of a chief—consideration and helpfulness personified. He seemed intuitively to recognize my being at times too conscious that there was a stiff load to shoulder; and he came, like the good man and colleague he was, and he took the heavy end.

The work was steady and multiform, but, honestly, it was not complex. Once the newness, for instance, of the position in Edinburgh of a Solicitor-General settling all the criminal work of Scotland with a capable team of Deputes who were all his seniors—once that newness

passed away, and once it was seen in London that I had taken stock of the desire for a better front bench attendance—a thing I gave with a great good will—the smoothness of the going was noted. We were running, about that time, a biggish Local Government Bill for Scotland, and the Parliamentary demands were severe; but, as I say, the smoothness of the going was noted. This may have accounted for another blow from the unexpected which nearly knocked me over, and in some measure broadened and changed the current of my life. I was to touch, at its very quick, the politics of Ireland.

* * * * *

It turned out that Morley had been keeping his eye upon, and in fact stalking me. Greater prominence had, you see, been given to my becoming Solicitor-General, because the Unionists, although I had entered the House only about eighteen months before, and stood on the same ticket, blundered badly in contesting the seat. A fluent English barrister was found to oppose me, and he was handsomely beaten after a rattling contest. The majority was nearly doubled and the Burghs came to be looked upon as a Radical stronghold.

I sometimes think that the measure of that Parliament might well in the eye of the historian be its Opposition. The Opposition's three characteristics were—the ability of its men, the efficiency of its machine, and, withal, the hopeless short-sightedness of its policy. This last only time could reveal. Has it not done so? Think of it in things small and great! The Scotch Grand Committee—a mere trifle, a harmless commonplace of procedure—then made quite a battlefield. At the other end of the scale the Home

Rule Bill, with contention enough to threaten the very existence of Parliamentary government, a Bill odious then beyond all thinking to such men, and thrown out in another place, but a Bill which to-day the same types of men recognize to be of a safety and a moderation so singular that what was at that time rejected with fury and with scorn would to-day be accepted with meekness and with gratitude.

At the height of this fury and scorn period, in the spring of 1895, you may imagine the nerve required even of an Irish Chief Secretary in bringing in a Land Bill which was to amplify and crown the remedial Irish legislation of 1870 and 1881. I need not go into these things, except to tell you that the Bill came to grief with the Government which framed it: but its denouncers saw its value when their turn came, and its principles reappeared and found their way to law under the distinguished Chief Secretaryship of Mr. George Wyndham.

One day that spring your mother and I were walking in the precincts of the House, when we were accosted by Morley. We were old Cluny friends. Said he:

"Mrs. Shaw, I have just been to your husband's room."

Then to me:

"Shaw, I want a word or two with you. When could we meet?"

We made a fixture for the following morning.

"What will this be next?" said the dear one.

Next day he said:

"You know that there is a Land Bill for Ireland coming forward. Well, it is, of course, full of law, a thing I am supposed to know nothing about. Now owing

to the self-denying ordinance of the Irish, none of their party, not even their lawyers, can be in the Government. So there are the MacDermott and his colleague, Attorney and Solicitor, helping, of course, privately, but they are outside. Inside, here in the House, here am I, with no law officer. To come to the point: I want you."

"Me?" said I; "I would do anything to help you all, but how could I do that? I should have to learn it all up. And besides, what would Mr. Balfour say? I could not desert him. Is this your own idea?"

"It is more than that," said he. "The Cabinet approves and the Lord Advocate has been sounded and is willing."

So there you are. Off went the brave woman to her dear flock—all the four by this time getting the most solid and sensible schooling that Edinburgh could provide—knowing full well that this meant a fresh invasion of my private practice and a fresh menace to our family life. And I to internment: fresh studies in law and history; conferences with Lord Spencer, with Irishmen like Sexton, Dillon, Redmond and O'Connor, and—day after day—with Morley.

Slender, slender, was the equipment. It stood something like this:—(1) For some literary purpose years before I had read a good deal for an article to the *British Quarterly Review* on "The Union with England of Scotland and Ireland."

"Where could I get something?" said the Chief Secretary to me one day, when I was pointing a contrast, "some kind of comparative statement of the two cases?"

"I don't know," said I. And then, after a pause, "unless, by-the-by, it be in a paper I wrote myself." So

it was sent for, and the article perhaps served a turn. How nothing is ever lost!

(2) For some debating purpose I had read and studied Barry O'Brien's "History of the Irish Land Acts."

(3) The third was the most curious of all. Once in a division on the Home Rule Bill, I had gone into the lobby in support of an amendment by the little Parnellite party. The purpose of it was frankly to call the proposed Irish Legislature a Parliament. What a timid pack party men are! There were only seven of us in that lobby. Two were Redmonds—John, a born leader, orator and patriot; and William, who afterwards showed his desire for a true reconciliation between Ireland and England by laying down his life for the Empire.

"What makes you," said John Redmond to me, "take such an interest in Ireland and the like of this?"

"Well," said I; "my answer is—it was Sydney Smith."

"Sydney Smith?" said he; "what do you mean?"

"Many years ago," I replied, "I read certain remarkable reviews, in his collected Essays, of the books of Henry Parnell and other authors on Ireland, its history, its misgovernment, its Penal Laws."

What an unfolding of wrong, shortsightedness, revenge, ascendancy, misery, these books reveal!

Shocked at the bedraggled spectacle, Sydney Smith, in a burst of wrath, makes his memorable outburst:

"So great and so long has been the misgovernment of that country that we verily believe the Empire would be much stronger if everything was open sea between England and the Atlantic, and if skates and codfish swam over the fair land of Ulster."

Of this I reminded Redmond: We became friends; and once on the eve of a critical debate he asked me for the volume, which I took to him.

I don't want you to go to sleep without getting the benefit of another of these passages which—both for historical interest and for political purposes—made such a deep impression on your father's mind. So I am writing it down. It is on that penal code which burnt into the Irish mind an ineradicable belief in the appalling injustice and unwisdom of England. Read this:—

"During the reigns of George I and George II the Irish Roman Catholics were disabled from holding any Civil or Military office, from voting at elections, from admission into corporations, from practising law or physic. A younger brother by turning Protestant might deprive his elder brother of his birthright; by the same process he might force his father, under the name of a liberal provision, to yield up to him a part of his landed property, and if an eldest son, he might in the same way reduce his father's fee simple to a life estate. A Papist was disabled from purchasing freehold lands, and even from holding long leases; and any person might take his Catholic neighbour's house by paying £5 for it. If a child of a Catholic father turned Protestant he was taken away from his father and put into the hands of a Protestant relation. No Papist could purchase a freehold, or lease for more than thirty years, or inherit from an intestate Protestant nor from an intestate Catholic, nor dwell in Limerick or Galway, nor hold an Advowson, nor buy an Annuity for life. £50 was given for discovering a Popish Archbishop, £30 for a Popish Clergyman, and ten shillings for a Schoolmaster."

How often have I told you that to plant antipathies is to give root to what may last for generations; so often, alas! do effects linger, long after causes have been removed. Thus it is that every 12th of July in Belfast still continues to be a disfigurement to civil life.

Then is not the following a political lesson worth remembering and remembering? Years and years ago I wrote it out, and I find it alongside of my Sydney Smith note. For the life of me I cannot place its authorship. Was it Smith who composed it, or Sir Erskine May, or was it even John Milton himself?

"It is a vain thing to boast of the severity of laws, and keenly prosecute disorders already committed, which, though it may have the appearance of justice, yet many will think it not convenient; for if you suffer the minds of people to be galled and chafed with a continued train of hardships and severities, until their manners be corrupted, and then punish them for these offences to which they thought their circumstances necessitated them, what else will be concluded from this but that you first make them offenders and then punish them for their offences?"

How awful and how frequent have been the exemplifications of this truth! To-day do we not feel the pinch of it in every act and scene of the tragedy of Ireland?

Do forgive me, dear Isabel, if I have forgotten to be lightsome. Some aspects of life and history are very grim.

Anyhow, it was on top of this thin subsoil that the seeds of my instruction had to be sown. When the debate on the second reading of the Bill came on, I followed Mr. Chamberlain, moving the adjournment of the debate. Next day was trying enough. Chamberlain came down to the House in courtesy for the reply, and he, Mr. Balfour and the others were generous, notably Mr. Sexton speaking for the Irish party. As I left the House Mr. Speaker Peel, austerity itself, called me to his side and spoke words of, most touching approbation. The public prints

gave me a new kind of title; in addition to being Solicitor-General for Scotland, I was, if you please, called "Under Secretary for Ireland"!

Meantime, life had become a little less straitened. On August 22, 1894, a Treasury Minute was passed raising the Lord Advocate's salary from a little over £3,000 to £5,000, and the Solicitor-General's salary from about £950 to £2,000. The Scotch Members were all agreed about this, and Graham Murray—rarest of clever heads and staunchest of friends—nipped in opportunely on the Scotch Grand Committee on some Bill and drove the point home.

That was the true reason of the change of figure. I fear that I gave a different version. Spencer, the gayest and most attractive of whips, said to me:

"Tommy Shaw, tell me how it is that you have only been six months in office and have doubled your screw?"

I answered on the nail:

"Sheer merit, Bobby Spencer," said I; "sheer merit."

"Sheer merit," said he; "I see;" and he passed on, carefully adjusting his immaculate collar.

But the Parliamentary battle grew keener and keener. The country showed signs of restiveness and distrust. Smaller and perilously smaller grew our majorities on a division. The whipping on both sides was merciless. One evening I dined at Berkeley Square with Lord Rosebery; there was some anxiety on foot, and they waited my arrival. On entering, behind the hour, the Premier exclaimed: "Ah! here at last is our Solicitor-General."

I replied seriously: "It has been a close division: a narrow shave; a majority of two."

"On which side?" said the host imperturbably.

"On our side," said I.

"Then that is all right," said he; "now let us all go safely in to dinner."

This kind of thing could not last. It was plain that our overthrow was at hand.

Enough, enough! Another budget some day soon, from

Your estimable friend and

FATHER.

LETTER XXI

A POLITICAL LECTURE

Craigmyle.

September 20, 1920.

DEAREST MAIDIE,

Think what it was to be thrown out into the cold. No payment of Members of Parliament in those days: not a penny. Fought five elections in my time: three elections in as many years. Any help from any organization or any fund except my own savings? Not a penny. I remember well after the Cordite vote, in 1895, walking back to Queen Anne's Mansions and saying to your mother in the midst of a party of friends:

"We are out, my dear—out for ten years."

True it was. It made a difference, and there was much to consider.

The profession had been very forbearing of my absences and very mindful of me when I could be on the spot; and it seemed fairly clear that if my presence in Edinburgh could be assured so also would my practice. Thus, if we had been minded that way, we could have accepted the defeat as a notice to quit.

But the idea of giving the battle up never crossed our minds. To dub this a felt call to continued public service would be to put it on too high a pedestal. Simply it was that I loved the House of Commons—the men, the life,

the moving panorama of affairs. As to the chance of helping good causes along, it lay *there*, rather than in the more comfortable line and the narrower view of private advantage.

If I ever had any doubt, and I had none, it would have been dispelled by the loyalty of the Liberals of the Burghs. Their support was unwavering: and their handling of a fight a thing to see. Everything political they translated into combat. When towards the close of my first Session I paired with Lord Randolph Churchill there was a shaking of the head. They thought a pair was a fight. And one Hawick weaver allowed to another, "Weel, Maister Shaw's met his match *this time*"! There was no manner of coalition of parties, or compromise of principle, with them; their flag was never struck, never at half-mast. As broad hints of this kind of thing, however —I mean coalition on the one hand and compromise on the other—were presently coming along, the Border staunchness was to me a real stand-by. You shall hear of that topic in a little.

So then! It was the Wilderness. We were in opposition: very much so indeed. You would hardly be interested in the daily hammer and tongs work. Education was a great topic: my text always being that to clericalize education is to sterilize it. Gradually in and about that subject a party of forwards was formed on the opposition side, and more was to be heard of nearly every one of them. To a Government supported by a docile and overwhelming crowd, they were a particularly aggravating band.

In Committee—all of them except Buxton and myself below the gangway—they did a real service, analytically

on the bills and educationally on the public. There were Robson, McKenna, Macnamara, Sydney Buxton, Englishmen; Lloyd George, Herbert Lewis and others, Welshmen; Scotland was nearly all on the ultra-respectable side—and as the waggish and very brainy Dr. Wallace used to say, Shaw had to play the part of Lion Rampant himself.

But none of us could hold the candle to Lloyd George. He developed an amazing Parliamentary dexterity, and no man in charge of a Government Bill could afford to disregard him. He was no obstructionist—oh no: but the moral anxiety with which he could invest a trifle of expression and show the superiority, say, of the word "which" to the word "that," was enough to send the Minister in charge of a measure into fits of fury: the rest of us, of course, into fits of laughter. Then, out of all this cloud of finesse, suddenly would come from him a gleam of real eloquence, revealing dangers and defects in the Bill and a new and better way. I suppose it is wicked to be proud of it, but we had a great time.

In the midst of all this struggle—by-the-bye, why was it so irresponsible? Why, my dear, because the responsible quarters—as we came to see more and more publicly—the responsible quarters were not on what you might call very easy terms with each other.

There were Temptations in the Wilderness.

* * * * *

One of these Temptations was Liberal Imperialism. As for Imperialism, that is to say, the swashbuckler type which claimed the name, *it* needed no lift. It was sup-

ported well enough and more congenially in the other camp, where militarism was at its pranks here and there, and was desperate for more adventurous cantrips than even the Jameson Raid which was coming along.

And as for Liberalism, the *chef d'œuvre* of the party of Temptation was, as Tim Healy wittily said to me, to put Home Rule into cold storage. Home Rule, with all the Herculean work of Mr. Gladstone and the party upon it, and that Irish alliance which had been a model of assiduous Parliamentary constancy—all this courage and loyalty and ardour to be damped down, the party machine to be put under reconstruction, and Home Rule to be put into cold storage.

I know, I wish to know, nothing of the private differences which people buzzed about. Sir William Harcourt was our leader in the Commons, and all I know is that he was my hearty and encouraging and entertaining friend.

"Ah," said he to me one day before we went into opposition, and after I had been to Scotland officially at the General Assembly, "ah, Mr. Solicitor-General, come and tell me all about it. So the Fathers and Brethren have dispersed: the Lord High Commissioner has vacated Holyrood; and I suppose the Marchioness has given up flirting with the Moderator?"

When we were out of office and getting more and more into the trough of the wave his gaiety did not desert him.

"Tell me, Sir William," said I, when we were seated together during some dull debate on which he was keeping an eye, "tell me something of your life at the Parliamentary Bar."

He gave that gurgling chuckle of his which shook his heavy frame, and then he said:

"I was once, about the beginning, taken in as third counsel. My seniors were Mr. Hope Scott and Mr. Pope. We were for Lord ——, and we were to oppose an Irish Railway scheme. So we had a conference and Lord —— came to it.

"Said Hope Scott, 'Would your Lordship tell us in a word what your case is?'

"'My case,' said his Lordship, 'is that the Directors are all damned scoundrels.'

"'Any more?' said Scott.

"'No,' said Lord ——. 'That's enough, isn't it? That is my case.'"

We both laughed; and I said: "Very definite."

Then he resumed:

"The very thing I said at the blessed conference. I struck in, 'Your instructions, Lord ——, are very clear. You wish the case run on those lines?'

"'I do,' said his Lordship.

"So we all agreed that there was no more to be said. And when the Bill came on, of course, Hope Scott and Pope weren't there."

"What happened?" said I.

"Oh," he said, "I ran the case according to instructions. I cross-examined the first director. It rather appeared that, after all, there was something in Lord ——'s idea. When the cross-examination finished, my clerk pulled my gown and said to me:

"'Lord —— has given instructions to double your brief fee.'

"Then came on another director. At the close

of his evidence my clerk again pulled my gown and said:

"'Lord —— has given instructions to treble your brief fee.'

"I turned to him and said: '*Any more directors?*'"

"And were there?" said I to him.

"Alas, no, Shaw," said he. "They wouldn't face the music. The Bill collapsed."

* * * * *

It seems a bit of a shame to go from this nonsense to a serious strain. But it would be a mistake to think that there was not a mighty weight of dead earnest in the work of those days. I am not speaking of the legal work and the hardship of even attempting to lead two lives four hunded miles apart. But in Parliament, I do think that good seed was being sown.

Some of it, alas! may be late in ripening. Take this instance. Many years of study had convinced me that not a few of the social ills which infect, and are apt to convulse, society are, there or thereabouts, owing to laws which favour the aggregation of land in the hands of the few, and impede its distribution among the many. Many things lead to this; it is a danger to the State. Many conventions, including family pride, favour it; and the legislation against the danger is hampered on every hand.

Mark this, my lady, and mark it well: for after a year or two, when women fully realize what it is to have the vote, you may hear more about it. By the laws both of England and Scotland landed estates are succeeded to by the eldest son. The lot of the younger sons was easier in former days. One, say, under the law of patronage,

went into the Church; another, under the law of purchase, went into the Army. The younger sons, and all the girls, succeeded by the law to not a single acre. The boys may rough it: so may viragos—I do not speak of them. But did God ever make a sweeter type than the British gentlewoman, her with the clear eye, the gentle and the dainty upbringing, her life and hands full of the ministry of loving kindness: yet so often, and so often at life's crisis, made by a shameless law of inheritance to fold up her slender belongings and to face the world "a penniless lass with a long pedigree"?

So I tabled a little Bill with the modest purpose of cutting the system in Scotland up by the roots, and assimilating the law of succession to land to that of all other possessions. Result, primogeniture would go. Daughters and younger sons would have equal rights with their eldest brother, property would be distributed or come into the market so that the proceeds would be distributed, and be shared penny and penny about.

Add to this awful consummation of plain and simple justice this other stroke. In Scotland the dead hand cannot rule all; there is, as the lawyers say, a legal limit to the power of testacy. Why not? said the law of Rome. Why not? say the laws of many European countries. And they say it of all the deceased's property; whereas in Scotland they say it of all except land: while in England they do not say it at all. The power of testacy is unlimited there: the dead hand rules all.

During the French Revolution it was, I think, Mirabeau who exclaimed: "A testament. What is a testament? It is the will of a man who has no longer any will, with regard to property which is no longer his property."

And two of the extraordinary facts in the French Revolution case are these: Distribution of property among the members of a family when the father dies is secured by giving to each of, say, his four children one-fifth, leaving only the remaining fifth at the father's disposal. Do you know that this very provision was drawn under the master hand and eye of Napoleon himself? While, secondly, when Louis Philippe came to the throne, he attempted to rear up again the old vast succession scandal of family pride. But he completely failed, amid the acclamations of all society except the courtiers of the day, and Paris was illuminated for three nights over the defeat of this Bourbon reaction.

Oh, dearie, dear, such a long circumbendibus! But you ought to know that that was the kind of thing, from the law of Rome, of France, of England and of Scotland, that went to the making of the aforesaid modest little mouse of a Bill. Was it ridiculous? Of course the law societies, arch defenders of the *status quo*, almost said it was. But, my dear lady, I hope you will have a long as well as a useful life. Great changes are in front of us. Women are feeling their power, their rights. Labour, on the one hand, is learning the lesson of the dangers of confiscation or a convulsive disintegration of society, and, on the other, it sticks to its determination that the aggregation of property must be ended on the lines of a radical change to justice in succession. In all ranks of society except the shallow and the thoughtless, men muse as did Burns:—

> "'Tis hardly in a body's power
> To keep at times from being sour,
> To see how things are shared."

It is for wise men and women to turn this feeling into

safe, honourable, just channels. Perhaps some day the little measure of healing which I moved on and on in the Order Paper of the Commons for years, may under a more auspicious sky, and in far wiser charge, see the light, and work its beneficent purpose.

A political lecture? Yes: yes! Lapse oratorical! But I promise you, my one and only.

Ever your own,

S. OF D.

P.S.—Out in the cold, did I say—out in the cold? What then? Should we simply stand and wait for better weather? Still colder then. Or should we fall to work where work was to be done, and find it bracing? Yes, the latter, surely, even in the dark decade 1895 to 1905. The Wilderness, did I say? And, as you shall hear, there were indeed Temptations in the Wilderness. What then? Should we listen to them, my dear, or should we fight them? These were the dilemmas of the Opposition years.

Different men took different lines. Work came my way—work on great public topics both in Church and State—and so did combat, heavy fighting. Good-bye, however, for the present, mere record of the Ins and Outs. Now is our chance. "Fresh woods and pastures new." You will ask, and I shall answer, some of your questions on non-political affairs. We are off on our Grand Tour. But we shall meet again in the Parliament fields. Meantime, as the centuries closed and opened, big issues were afoot.

LETTER XXII

THE WIZARDS

9, *Bolton Gardens, S.W.*5.

July 15, 1920.

MY DARLING ISABEL,

You have often asked me to tell you about any literary men I have come up against; and I have been wondering whether I could rummage in my memory for that kind of stuff.

When I entered Parliament the connexion of literary men with politics, or rather the identification of literary men with public men was commoner than I think it has ever been since.

When in the year 1894 I became Solicitor-General for Scotland, I found myself surrounded on the front bench by men who were known far and wide in the literary world. Think of it! I do not mention Gladstone himself, who dropped, alas! out of leadership a few months before I took office, nor do I mention Lord Rosebery, whose high literary gifts shone in whatever he wrote, and almost in whatever he spoke. Lord Rosebery was in the House of Lords; but there on the front bench of the Commons were Bryce, the author of many portly volumes, but notably of "The Constitution of America"; Morley, whose exquisite and daring papers from the time of his editorship of the *Fortnightly* had been collected and published, and who had followed these by many other notable books,

his "Life of Cobden" being one of the best; and, above all, there was Trevelyan, as quick and sensitive a soul to literary excellence as I have ever known, whose masterly "Life of Macaulay" stands between his early works, like "Cawnpore" and "Competition Wallah," and his later more diffuse but still invaluable work on "American History," as a great central peak stands in a fine range of mountains and of gentle and beautiful foothills.

These were the "Big Three"—Bryce, Morley and Trevelyan, while there were others of lesser note, like George Russell, Acland and Sydney Buxton, who wielded a facile and an accurate pen. My delights still were in literature, and the association with these men must surely have quickened the mind.

To come away from public men altogether, I cannot say that my recollections would help you to fresh views about many of those I am about to name. Stevenson I saw, but never knew, and I saw him once and once only, for he passed to the Bar at Edinburgh I think only two days after me, and I remember seeing him, with his very white wig and his glossy dark hair, his complexion of an ivory pallor and his gleaming dark eyes. I knew shortly afterwards from friends these two things about him:

Friend No. 1, a professor at the University and a practising barrister, told me this. A few days after Stevenson went to the Bar he had got a guinea sent to him, with "instructions." His sole duty was to ask the Judge for intimation and service of a Petition on the party against whom it was directed. All he had to do was to stand up at the Bar and utter three words interrogatively, "Intimation and Service?" But he was a mass of nerves,

and these three words he could not utter, and he besought his friend to go into Court and make the little motion for him. I never heard of his earning another guinea as an advocate.

I *did* hear of him, however, a year or two afterwards from Sir Walter Simpson, Friend No. 2, also an advocate. They were wandering on the banks, I think of the Loire, together, and Simpson told me that they had to record in each village they passed through, among other things, their ages. Part of their frolic was that at each place the one would grow a year older and the other a year younger. Stevenson went on in front composing madrigals. Simpson's progress was slower, as he was collecting moths and butterflies. As they neared a village Stevenson was seized by the police and, as he had nothing on him but his clothes, and these of the shabbiest order, and as he had no passport, and as he could give no intelligent account of himself, he was lodged in prison. Part of his statement had been that he was travelling with a baronet, and, sure enough, in an hour or two, when the baronet arrived, he was lodged in prison too, the suspicion against him being that the authorities knew nothing of baronets, but that a baron would not walk on his own feet or without a fine retinue! I think, however, Simpson had passports, and after some hours they were liberated. Stevenson, trying to put the best face upon it, spoke kindly to the jailor's wife and her children, but she brusquely ordered him off, telling him that she knew quite well he had come to sing at the Fair! Stevenson does allude to the affair in his writings, but Simpson assured me that he was quite unstrung by the incidents of that evening.

Another thing, however, about Stevenson you should

know. When the new books came out just about that time, I got hold of "Virginibus Puerisque." "There," said I to myself, "there is quality at last. English literature is not dead. I must keep my eye upon that man." That was briskly followed by his being nominated as a competitor for the office of Professor of Constitutional History in the University of Edinburgh, a position the nomination to which was in the gift of the Faculty of Advocates. A large meeting was held. I was but a youngster, but I seconded Stevenson's nomination. The other man—an excellent man of the ordinary type, by name Kirkpatrick—was elected by about 200 votes, Stevenson's entire following being only seven in number! I dare say if the nomination had been a year or two later the Bar of Scotland would have known better the genius that was in their midst—my only knowledge of him was through the book I have mentioned—but, as I say, its quality was unmistakable—and Stevenson might have been elected Professor. How well it was ordered that it was not so! The drudgery of such a job would have killed a man of his lively imagination, his subtle instincts and his poor health. Simpson, however, assured me that Stevenson had a much better historical equipment than was generally supposed. And certainly when you read works like "Kidnapped" and "Catriona" you can see how deftly and delightfully he could weave that class of matter into his web of romance.

You may be interested to know that, although I only once saw John Brown, the author of "Rab and his Friends," one of our acquaintances used to tell me beautiful stories about him, he being their family physician. At certain intervals of time he was well aware that a

mental affliction was again recurring and he put himself into voluntary retirement, emerging from it with as sweet and sunny a disposition as before.

His love for human kind was only equalled by his love for the canine kind. She told me that a friend, driving with him in his carriage along Princes Street, in Edinburgh, saw his attention suddenly attracted. As the carriage moved along, his eyes followed the view, and, lifting the back flap of the carriage, he peered anxiously and scrutinizingly out of the window.

"Is that a friend you know?" said his companion to him.

"No," said he, "but it is a dog I don't know!"

He used to tell with a certain twinkling humour of a certain grocer who had married three wives. He met him in Princes Street. Unknowing that wife No. 3 had also died, he passed him the time of day, and then, "And how's Mrs. Wilson, sir?" The inquiry no more discomposed Mr. Wilson than if it had been one for tea and sugar of which the stock had run low. "Oh! well, Dr. Broon, the fact is"—rubbing his hands—"the fact is, *I'm just oot o' wives at present*"!

I should tell you, Isabel, that if you want truly to understand the better part of the better side of the history of Scotland, you will find one way and another the deepest insight into at least a century of it in the "Horæ Subsicivæ." Dr. John Brown knew, in short, that the moving life of Scotland was not the official or the ornamental life, but was a life quickened by an active and practical evangelicalism—often allied, if you will, with Dissent—an evangelicalism which fired the blood as well as steadied the character, and he knew that it was from the Scotland

thus fired and quickened and steadied that there went large numbers of men to the colonies who have infused that energy and principle into the administration of colonial affairs which every self-governing colony readily acknowledges in the homage which it pays to the Scot.

You will be a little astonished to know that I can carry you back to an earlier generation still, and to Sir Walter Scott himself.

An old fellow-elder, Mr. Thomas Learmont, of the Saint James Place Church, with which I was connected in Edinburgh, was my informant. He was by business a bell-hanger; and as an apprentice-boy he was engaged on his job when Sir Walter Scott was laying out at Abbotsford those expensive alterations and additions which, alas! as it turned out, he could so ill afford.

"Did you ever see him, Mr. Learmont?" said I.

"O yes," he said; "he used to come in and out among us, hirpling here and hirpling there upon a stick; and his blue bonnet had a bit of heather in it."

I got another side of the picture from a Sheriff Johnstone, of Selkirk, whom I visited after he was 90 years of age. I was keen to get from him any reminiscences of Scott, who had been Sheriff of the County.

"I suppose," said I, "Mr. Johnstone, that Sheriff Scott was very popular?"

"No, no," said Johnstone, "you are wrong there; he was real ill-likit."

"How in the world could that be?" said I, rather upset.

"Oh," he said, "he was that hard upon the poachers! They flung clods at him as he was going down the brae: and they were had up before the Lords at Edinburgh,

and some of them got twelve months' imprisonment for the crime of 'murmuring judges!'"

This was a damper; but I asked about the earlier days.

"Well," he said, "the fact is that I was pretty good at the fiddle, and I was gey and fond of the servant lassies. And I used to go down to the kitchen at Abbotsford and play them a tune. And then," he added, "Sir Walter, he used to come into the kitchen and pretend to be very angry; but we knew what it would come to."

"What was that?" said I.

"Oh," he said, "he promised us forgiveness if I would play him 'The Flowers o' the Forest'—and I did that with a good will, him standing in the middle of the floor to listen to me!"

Think of it. Picture him; standing there; leaning on his staff, listening. The quaint and quavering melody rises and falls; mystery and tragedy and a waft of weeping, etched on the silence of the night. Now his ear catches afar the sound of a wider, wilder music. Long ages ago Ettrick and Yarrow met together, and he hears the rush of their waters poured into the Tweed. And with the refrain of

"The Flowers of the Forest are a' wede awa'"

his imagination takes wing, from stream to strath and strath to stream, over the centuries and over the everlasting hills, till it reaches Flodden Field. Be assured that the melody of the quaint lament stirred his heart no less than it has stirred the hearts of generations of his race. For, more vividly than any of the sons of men, could he reclothe the past in all the glory of its chivalry.

I know not why, here in this feverish city, on which the cool of the evening seems to descend so tardily, I should have let myself go on this old theme. For I am a Burns man, and Burns was the Wizard of the Future and the hopes and the brotherhood of man. But Scott was the Wizard of the Past, and did he not ennoble the human story, making our annals and inheritance stately and rich and precious?

I must to bed. But as you see, my mind is "over the hills and far away." And I am thinking of a sweet somebody with the auburn hair.

Your doting

FATHER.

LETTER XXIII

THE MILLIONAIRE.

Craigmyle,
September 1, 1919.

MY DEAR ISABEL,

Alas! This week has brought the news of Mr. Andrew Carnegie's death.

Carnegie had a daring, adventurous spirit, and he was able to punctuate the record of his astounding successes, in business, in finance, in manufacture, with vivid dramatic detail. But I am sure I am one of very many of those whom he gathered about him who heard his record with a rather unintelligent wonder. I once frankly told him so. He was giving an account of an installation of two new blast furnaces, their enormous output, their saving in cost, and the like. I said to him:

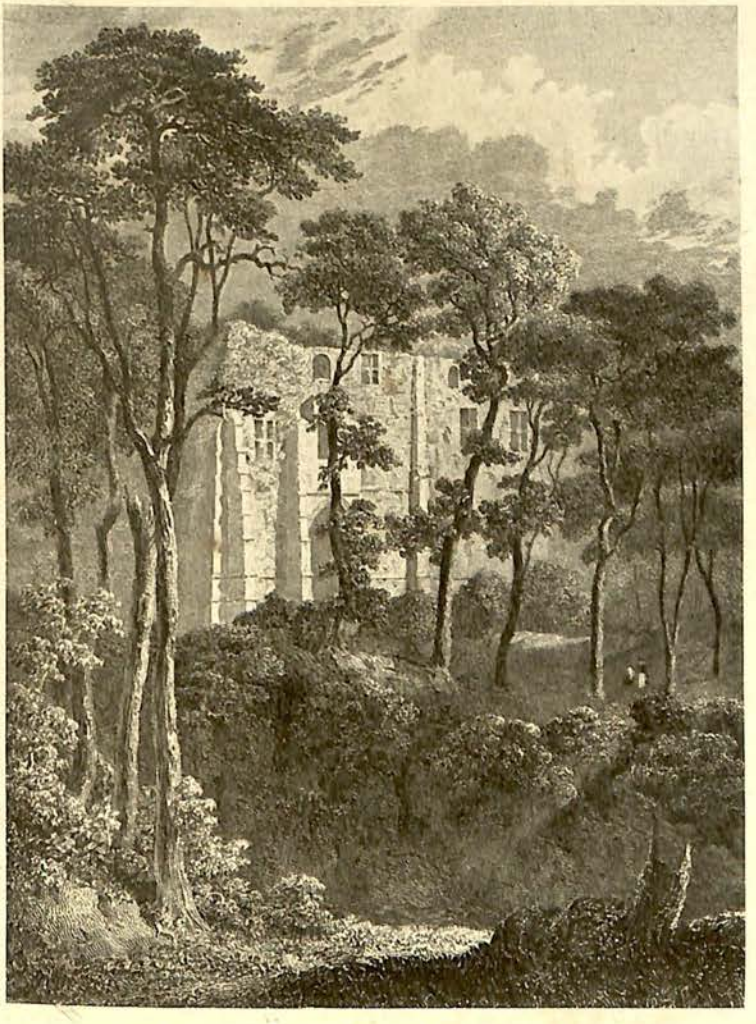
"It all sounds very wonderful. But honestly I cannot grasp it; I have no standard by which to measure these things."

"What do you mean?" said he.

"Well," I replied, "how, for instance, do these two blast furnaces compare with the Baird's?"

"I think," he said, "that the output of these two new furnaces alone is equal to the output of all the furnaces in Scotland?"

In short, on all that material side of things, we had, as I say, nothing in common.



THE ROYAL PALACE OF DUNFERMLINE.

From an old print.

On the spiritual side, the same, alas! was largely true. Our upbringing, fellow-townsmen though we were, had been different, in the essentials. The old rigidity most righteously he despised. But the noble underlying spirit, with an evolution ever to higher and to higher planes, and with new enrichments of scholarship—such things made him impatient; and he would—at least to me, for I declined positively ever to lower my flag to him—he would fling out at you savage tenets of the Old Testament as if they were Religion!

Yet he had a great heart; and he had a good heart. Far and wide he voyaged—to Confucius, to Zoroaster, to the world's sages—seeking the truth if haply he might find it. And I do believe that, after all those voyagings, and storms of argufying, and declamatory monologue, into which an uneasiness of mind seemed ever to draw him, that at last his bark landed on the Christian shore. Surely it could not be otherwise: he revered conscience, sought truth, loved and helped mankind, and was honest. Many a time he was wrathful with me, because I would not yield. But he is gone, and I want you to know that that is my testimony about him.

Of course there were points of contact between us. The most real of these were in our dreams. And there we came together, helping, co-operating, companioning each other. The dream of my life was to have the educational ladder free to the ability of Scotland wherever real ability could be found, down to the humblest and poorest dwelling in the land. That was something for Scotland. And he helped my dream to come true by giving ten millions of dollars for free University education.

The dream of his life was to be the Laird of Pitten-

crieff, that sweet enclosure of the ruins of monastery and Royal palace from which as a boy he and his townsmen of Dunfermline had been always debarred. His dream came true; at a critical moment he besought my help and I bought for him the picturesque Glen; and he gifted it to the lucky old town. That was something for Dunfermline.

Who says there is no romance in life?

I hope that I was numbered among his friends till the last. But for two years he was unable to re-visit Skibo, and I never visited New York. During that period I learned with deep regret of his failing powers, and I was sad, but not surprised, at having no letter from him.

He was in some ways a quite distinct type of the remarkable man. I never quite understood him. We fished together: but even on that we differed. He had a delusion that a good basket of trout was like a loss of capital and made a loch so much the poorer—a delusion not unnatural to a millionaire and a non-sportsman.

He liked literary men about him: and they listened. Your mother and I once lunched with him at the Langham to meet Mr. and Mrs. Clemens. He got on to a familiar tack and declaimed against people getting mixed up as directors with business they knew nothing about, against speculation, and all in favour of a man sticking wholeheartedly to his trade.

At that luncheon we got what I have often thought is a double characteristic of Americans: I mean about their telling of stories. For twenty years the *Century Magazine* was the only magazine that entered my library, just as for your nursery the only one was the *St. Nicholas*. There could hardly be a higher testimonial to the United States

of America than that. For a short written story, select in matter, and in treatment vivid, dramatic, and done with, America whips the world. But set an American on his legs, allowing him to pad up a speech with a story, and it is only the special restraint of a forgiving Providence that prevents every auditor making for the door. The detail, the elaboration of nothing at all, the visibility of the point far far off—why, in a country of revolver practice, is it allowed?

Clemens was a good illustration of both sides of it. At lunch he told us a story of a gloomy-faced fellow-traveller whom he found to be reading—the "Innocents Abroad"! But before he got to the climax we had to be worked up to the smiling scenery of England, the anxiety of mind of the author, the personal appearance of the reader, and course pursued course in the lunch, and then all was over—all but the story: it was still running.

But now see the other side of it. Some time after that luncheon appeared "Puddenhead Wilson." And there, by the way of preface to one of the chapters, I found that Clemens had put into a tabloid all the doctrine about sense in business of which we had heard so much from Carnegie.

It runs something like this: "The wise man sayeth: 'Put not all thine eggs into one basket.' And the wiser man sayeth: 'Put all thine eggs into one basket, and *watch that basket!*'"

* * * * *

Now a truce to irrelevances. "I have a tale to tell, oh!"

Of course you girls knew the rich man pretty well both at Cluny and at Skibo. Elsie's singing pleased him and

so did your violin-playing. He was certainly fond of music, had heard good music in various lands; and he was genuinely anxious to give it a lift as a "sweetness and light" instrument. He used to join with gusto, keeping good time and tune, in any American chorus that was hit on of an evening, but naturally he had no expert knowledge of the subject and he depended in that, as in so many other things, upon his impulses as the motive for his benefactions.

Good impulses they were, however; they leaned to the sentimental side. Great and noble benefactions they were, and of some of them an ungrateful world was not worthy. Naturally, having had so much to do with it, I think that his ten millions of dollars for the Scotch University Trust was the least rash and the most fruitful of them all.

Often and often you have asked me to put down the true story of the origin of that great gift. Well, here goes.

In other letters you have had a peep at what romancers would call the "early struggles." Well, they *were* struggles, and they made a deep impression on my mind. Once I made a singular discovery. In my second year at the University, I happened, one week-end at home in Dunfermline, to be let loose among old books and papers. There were a good many of these about. The notes under my father's beautiful hand showed signs of real scholarship. He had had his bit of Latin, too, in his day, but the necessity of earning a living by the sweat of his brow had shut up for him most of the upper doors of life. Suddenly I came upon a private ledger kept by my mother, and my attention was arrested by a long column

of items headed by some title like "Tom's College." There were the entries, advances for board and lodging, advances for books, and then one damning entry froze into my mind. It was "University Class Fees," say, somewhere about fifteen guineas. The column was for a five months' session and ran over £100.

She had never whispered a word to me about keeping a record; she had never denied me the money required —absolutely trusting me to disburse it honestly and legitimately—never a complaint had passed her lips, not even when she realized that after working at the law for three years out of four for nothing, I was in for another four or five years at college without earning a shilling, all the oncost and the upkeep to be out of her slender bank account. Faith and hope and love were her portion, and therewith, and without any blindness to the struggle—therewith she was content.

All the entries except one were honourable; but the entry of "Class Fees" seemed to me, knowing all that it signified to her, to be indefensibly mean. And in the renewing of my vows—for there are such occasions in life, my dear—I vowed that that item should go, that great corporations like Universities should no longer close their doors to those with straitened means, should no longer work their institutions and give their endowments making entrance and enjoyment easy for the rich and relatively harder for the poor.

Were there not, you ask, bursaries, and could not the poor win these? There, my dear, was another hardship, making the inequality cruel. The "well-off" parent had the means to secure for his sons the questionable advantages of cramming or the solid advantages of a full

Secondary School education. Thus and thereby even the bulk of the bursaries went past the poor. The world and the world's law seemed on every side against him.

I felt somehow that some universal bursary was required for everyone who had the knowledge and the brains to enable him to matriculate. That was the idea; a universal bursary; won by matriculation; won as a right. Nothing but that could bring strength and restore equality into the system. Otherwise there was more than meanness in it; there was social cruelty and national loss.

So there you are; the whole of these thoughts swept dimly through my mind as I read the modest yet tragic ledger sheet. Of none of them have I seen any reason to repent; nay, time and experience have deepened and strengthened my conviction of their truth, and I have seen them shine and spread until they have become the commonplaces of enlightened statecraft.

They were sizzling in my mind when I entered Parliament, and then one vacation I was fishing on Loch Laggan when suddenly they became very active and vivid. That, so to speak, would be Chapter Two of the University story. What I have written to you this morning may be called Chapter One—what the writers of stories would head, "The Birth of a Notion."

Quite enough at present,

From your very own,

S. OF D.

LETTER XXIV

THE LEARNED GHILLIE

Craigmyle.

September 2, 1919.

ISABEL DEAR,

In the summer of 1896 Carnegie was occupying Cluny Castle, Inverness-shire. He had parties of us up for a week at a time, as was his usual habit, during his Scotch autumns. Morley, Sir Walter Foster—afterwards Lord Ilkestone, and I think also Webster—afterwards Lord Chief Justice Alverstone—were among the set during my week.

Foster wanted grouse and took a keeper or two; Webster wanted ptarmigan on the high hills, and took the balance of the hill staff; I wanted trout from Loch Laggan, and all I could get for boatman—and a very good boatman he was—was a young, powerful, thick-set lad, whom I shall call James Mac. You remember him quite well.

I have always made a point of the comradeship of Highland boatmen and ghillies. On the whole and on the average, they are, in my opinion, the most intelligent men of the British community. Their aloofness and "take your measure" attitude slips off them when they are treated as real men, and their native courtliness and gallantry shine out.

James handled the boat cleverly, and the trout were

doing pretty well. Suddenly in the middle of a drift I said to the youth at the oars,

"James, are you going to be a ghillie—for always?"

He gave me no answer for a few moments; there was a cloud upon him; and then in a burst of confidence he said:

"Sir, I'm mad to be a doctor."

"Then why don't you be a doctor?" I asked.

"It's the expense," he answered; "my father is the village shoemaker, and there are six of us."

Then I tabled my card. "James," I said, "would it make a difference if there were no college fees to pay?"

He seemed to catch his breath, and the cloud lifted, and he said: "Oh, sir, if that was the case, my course would be cleared."

"Which college would you go to?" said I, and he answered at once—he had been thinking it all out, dreaming of it, in the silence of the hills—"To Glasgow."

"Why to Glasgow?" said I. "Is not Edinburgh a greater medical school?" To which his answer came at once, "The living in Glasgow is cheaper."

Here was a genuine case, not an unusual case—not so by hundreds—but a genuine case, and it had dropped into my hand. How could I throw it away? There came into my mind all the stock objections, and especially the familiar sneer that the Universities would be degraded because flooded with incompetent men, men with unwarranted ambition. I resolved to clear this point up, and to "mak' siccar."

"James," said I, "have you any Latin?"

To this he replied: "I have just finished my schooling at Kingussie, and I am sorry that I have not much of

the Roman poets. I have read all the writings of Cæsar, some of the books of Livy, and some "—here my memory fails me; it was either Cicero or Tacitus. He had read well into the Æneid, but he again confessed his lack of acquaintance with the Latin poets.

"Any Greek?" I asked.

"I know the writings of Homer," he replied; "but this last session we have been working on Thucydides." Other Greek authors he mentioned, including, I think, Æschylus. I learned afterwards, by the way, from the schoolmaster of Kingussie, that this account of his studies was well within the mark. They included certain books of Plato's Republic.

"Any mathematics?" said I. To which he answered, "I know all the writings " (that was a phrase he had)— "all the writings of Euclid. And" (after speaking of Algebra) "I am studying mensuration."

You should have seen the sensation at the Castle dinner-table that evening. I broke the story over it like a cataract. All were interested; some were up in arms: Morley was severely quizzical. The general sense was, at first, "unwarranted ambition," and there was, of course, a demand all round to know whether a ghillie boy had learning sufficient to enable him to enter a college without bringing down its average. Then I poured out the story of the lad's scholarship, Morley and Foster following me from point to point with questions. Then the head-shaking ceased, and we all went off to bed. Carnegie himself had not said as much as usual. He was puzzled, and he seemed to think that the ground was unsure. He discerned, I think, a broad and a big undertaking somewhere ahead.

Next morning Sir Walter said to me, "Shaw, you should tell that story to the House of Commons; it likes a human touch."

And so I did—on the next discussion of the Education estimates. Within forty-eight hours I had the offer, from a friend, of £25 a year for four years' fees and any extras. Mac's career was made. He came to Edinburgh, had his struggles, did well, and now commands a capital practice, and leads a useful, skilful, helpful life in England.

So ends Chapter Two of the Story. But there was more than Mac in it. The wider and the national scheme was to follow. The plot for that was thickening.

Now for a motor run, dear, a breath of the heather, and a sight of the hills.

Your garrulous, loving

FATHER.

LETTER XXV

A DREAMER'S DREAM

Craigmyle.

September 4, 1919.

DEAREST,

You say, I know, "Yes, yes, Father, but what really started the Free University education affair?" Well, that is the very thing I am going to tell you.

It was suddenly announced to us in Parliament that in consequence of a big sum of money going to be given for education to England, an equivalent or rather proportional grant—about one-ninth, but still a large figure—was coming to Scotland. What was to be done with it?

"Have you any views, Shaw?" said Bryce to me in the lobby of the House of Commons.

"Let us have free education in the Universities," I replied. He was always bustling; and in haste he said to me, "I don't hold with that," and passed on.

Thereupon I sat down and wrote a Memorandum of the situation and a plea for the idea, had the paper printed, and sent to all the Scotch members. It came to nothing, and went out like a lighted match on damp ground. That attempt to get public money failed, failed completely. An ideal? Not even that. It was treated as a dreamer's dream.

This, of course, did not satisfy me. So what next?

Had I not been teaching you all your lives to turn every trouble into an adventure? What next?

> "We'll hae misfortunes great and sma',
> But aye a heart aboon them a'."

Should I try a wider sweep and a heavier hammer? The cause was worth it.

The next effort was an article in the *Nineteenth Century*, entitled, "The Educational Peace of Scotland." It appeared in January of the year 1897, and all that I can say is that I could see quite well that in the open air the ground was not so damp. The historical appeal —that free education up to and through the Universities would be the consummation of the Knox tradition—went home, here and there. Another Knox ideal—that every son and daughter of Scotland should be so equipped as to develop every talent, every natural endowment, and should make the whole a national asset available "for the comfort of the Commonwealth"—that ideal, being furbished up, began to shine again.

After a while—oh! it seemed so long!—the article was read by at least one man in America—the very man I wished to get at.

In May, 1901, I received a telegram from Mr. Carnegie, asking me to meet him in Liverpool on the arrival of his ship. I was deep in engagements and wired regretting that I could not go. Some more wires followed; and he came to London and I met him at the Langham. I felt that, as the play-writers would say, the fateful hour had come.

"Shaw," said he, "I read your article in the *Nineteenth Century*."

"Yes?" said I.

Then he added, "I am disposed to realize your idea."

My heart went bump. I replied quietly: "That would be something for Scotland."

At once he asked, "How much do you need?" And I at once answered: "A million."

"How do you know that?" he asked.

"You see," I said, "an endowment would have to yield as much as would pay the fees and also leave room for an increase in the students."

"How much are the fees?" he inquired.

"About £50,000 a year," said I, "or, at least, they might come to that."

"How do you know that?" he asked—all in the same "down on the nail" style.

I had a card up my sleeve for him; for, in a way that I cannot possibly explain, I had been preparing for some sudden emergency. "I know it from this," said I, pulling from my pocket a little White Paper. "I moved for a Parliamentary Return on the subject a little while ago, and here it is."

He looked it over carefully, and then said, "How are we to do this? Can you manage?"

Here was railroad speed! I pulled up. "Mr. Carnegie," said I, "this is good business, but it is big business, too big to entrust to me or to one man. You must get the whole nation on your side, have a live trust, put men on it of both parties—take a look over the front benches of the Commons and the Lords, and we may get the men—and meantime send for Ross; we need skilled help like his."

"I agree to that," said he. "Ross will be wired for.

He will be here to-morrow. How about your men? Will they agree to be Trustees?"

"I don't know," said I; "but we can ask them."

"How can you do that?" he queried.

"I'll take a cab," said I.

So imagine your respected parent tumbling there and then into a hansom cab at the Langham door, a little dazed, a little exhilarated, strictly sober, but, I suppose, just like any man in a condition when dreams are coming true.

I went first to Bannerman. After I told him what was afoot, he said, "Lord, Tammas, this beats a'! That blessed little essay of yours which you sent round to us—well, it went into the waste-paper basket. And now here is the whole affair. Yes, of course, I'll be a Trustee." Then to Lord Reay; he was very cautious, very philosophical; and I could see (he was, of course, as deep as Bryce in the University set and looked at things as much as he from the University angle) that he shied a little at the free entry of students. I said to him that the University purposes proper would no doubt get something of substantial gain by and by. He agreed to the Trusteeship.

Then I went to the Scotch Office, as I had told Carnegie I would; and I at once found myself up against things. You could hardly on your oath have described the atmosphere as enthusiastic for free University education. "There is a scheme afoot, Lord Balfour," said I, "to further the cause of free University Education in Scotland, and as Secretary for Scotland I should like you to be very prominently in it." Then I mentioned Carnegie. He said little; showed no enthusiasm. Reticence was perhaps natural; all was strictly official. I felt

chilled. Then I had the feeling that it was meant I should be chilled. So I took fire.

"Look here, Lord Balfour," said I, "I came along here because you and your position should be very respectfully recognized, and you could help; but if you stand out, *this affair goes on.*" He said nothing.

Then I added, "There is a million of money in it!"

"What?" he said.

"Yes," said I, "a million of money."

Then we talked. I again impressed upon him my view that, as Secretary of Scotland, he should be associated with a movement of national importance. Then he agreed, saying something ominous which I forget, about consulting the Universities.

It was, however, evident that the thing—the formation of the Trust—was now booming. The struggle ahead I only partly saw, but anyhow, Sir Henry was wholly with me, and there was comfort there.

I went back to Carnegie; and Ross came next morning. Dear Dr. Ross! he is now over eighty, and there at this moment he sits, in a great arm-chair in the Craigmyle Library, and he snoozes away so comfortably. But he has brought north his store of the original documents, and he is to check what I say in these University letters. He is the only other witness besides myself of a remarkable scene which I may by and by describe to you, and he has an intellect as penetrating and an outlook on life as serene as ever. Long may his bow abide in strength.*

Your rather tired (for is not this too long a letter?) and humbly affectionate

FATHER.

* March, 1921. He is now, by the favour of His Majesty and to the hearty satisfaction of friends and public, Sir John Ross.

LETTER XXVI

THE AUTHENTIC LETTER

Craigmyle.

September 12, 1919.

MY DEAR LASS,

Was it you—or which of the other rebels was it—that used to reiterate to your mother and me that the secret of a well-regulated household was—obedient parents?

Anyhow, you are most insistent about the rest of this free University education story. After all, it is a little bit of real Scotch history, and it is well that you should get it at first hand and true.

To be frank, mighty little enthusiasm did I find, in the ranks of those who would have been powerful to help the scheme along, for franking students through the colleges, for realizing the national ideal, for giving to every son and daughter of Scotland this chance and scope of developing intellectual gifts and talent, whenever in the body of the people it could be found. On the contrary, the opposite idea, the idea of the elect—gathered not from the well-to-do in an intellectual sense, but from the well-to-do in a material sense, an elect for whom Universities and other national institutions should be a preserve—that idea was in the very bones of men, most superior men with a great leverage over public opinion through the Press and other channels.

Many letters, memoranda, and telegrams were flying

about; and—for I was up to the neck in law work—my recollection is not quite clear as to the order of the next events. However, I met Carnegie and told him that I myself saw that the Universities would be none the worse of strengthening, especially on the scientific research side. Lord Balfour of Burleigh was very properly urging this, and I thought that a claim in that sense was right. The good donor agreed to add another half million to his gift and to dedicate it to that purpose. That, added to "Shaw's million," as he always called it to Ross, brought the donation up to seven and a half millions of dollars. The first drafts of the Trust Deed were made up for that sum, and a meeting was held in the Scotch Office, where Carnegie, as prospective donor, addressed his prospective Trustees.

He confirmed all by the following letter:

"*Langham Hotel, London.*

"*May* 18, 1901.

"My Lords and Gentlemen,

"I now put in writing the substance of the statement which I made to you this morning.

"Upon reading an article by my friend and townsman, Mr. Thomas Shaw, M.P., in the *Nineteenth Century* magazine some time ago, I was deeply interested in his proposal that the Universities of my native land should be opened free to the capable youth of Scotland, in accordance with the scheme of that educational benefactor John Knox.

"I took an early opportunity of conferring with my friend upon the subject, and learned from him that about £50,000 per annum would cover all the fees paid by students. I thereafter conferred with my friends Mr. Morley and Professor Bryce upon the subject, and finally at my suggestion Mr. Shaw kindly arranged a meeting with his Lordship the Secretary for Scotland. The result of that highly satisfactory interview is the meeting

which we have just held, you having all been conferred with in the interval.

"I said this morning, and now confirm, that it would give me the greatest pleasure to provide the necessary funds for the purpose stated; a draft embodying the details you are already in possession of. From it you will observe that, in addition to abolishing fees, I have provided sufficient funds to enable the Universities in due time to put themselves abreast of the American and Continental Universities in their scientific departments. The securities which I propose to transfer to you as Trustees are seven and a half million dollars in Bonds of the United States Steel Corporation, the revenue from which will be £78,000 per annum. The estimated charge for abolition of fees from Scottish students being £48,000, this would leave for the scientific and other modern departments mentioned, say, £30,000 per annum for the fifty years the securities run. This expenditure for a number of years should provide the necessary building and equipment of the science department.

"Further details are given in the paper herewith submitted.

"I desire to express my deep appreciation of your co-operation in agreeing to serve as Trustees. I have not the shadow of a doubt but that the funds committed to your hands will be so used as to keep our native land in the foremost rank in the education of the people. You will, I am sure, readily understand the peculiar charm this gift has for me, being suggested by one Dumfarlan bairn and made possible by another.

"Always very truly yours,

"ANDREW CARNEGIE."

There was the whole thing. Purpose: "That the Universities of my native land should be opened free to the capable youth of Scotland." Money: seven and a half million dollars. Trustees: all accepting; everything, in short, as tight as a drum.

* * * * *

But no! no! no! my dear; little did I know of the determined prepossessions I was up against. Before many

days were over I was to feel their force. Bannerman, hearing of possible retrogression, laughed aloud at it, and wanted to know what right we had to control the donor and to look a gift horse in the mouth.

But the situation was more serious than that. And its danger was in Carnegie himself, who naturally wanted to be associated with men of power, and who always had a real weakness towards the aristocrat. In later life, poor man, this led him far astray; and his belaudings of the German Emperor went so far that their brutal falsification broke his heart.

Towards the end of May the storm broke. On the 20th, when the ink was hardly dry on Carnegie's letter of gift, I wrote to Dr. Ross this letter from the House of Commons Library. You will see that my feeling over the discovery of what had been going on was keen enough, almost to the sense of outrage.

"I have just learned," I say, "from Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, who was positively shocked and angered, that Bryce has had a letter from Lord Reay saying that Mr. Carnegie has *modified his scheme*, and that there is to be no general exemption from fees, but only on special application on ground of poverty! I told Sir H. that the thing was incredible. . . . It is a curious development of the classes *v.* the masses! The Professor lot, as Sir Henry says, will put obstacles in the way and try to grab for their own University purposes; and so the old sad record of improving a merely class institution would go on; while the great body of the Scotch people would be left outside. This means more, in misdirection and in loss, than I can describe."

Well did I know that all over Scotland fathers and mothers, who and whose families were an honour to the land, the very men, women and children whom it was a

pride to preserve and favour—they would never, never plead this ground of poverty: they would rather die first. The issue was—a dole or a right. This kind of thing could not keep. The "superior" Press kept harping on the same old string. The influences gathered and the millionaire was being engulfed. I felt singularly powerless and alone.

But I was, as I have now discovered after an interval of eighteen years, not alone. One journalist who knew his Scotland widely, deeply, and at the first hand of a lifetime, foresaw the peril and went to Carnegie. It was Sir William Robertson Nicoll. But even his "heart sank" when he saw the company the rich man was keeping. Here is his account of the interview—in a letter which Ross showed to me only a week ago. I purposely leave the name of the visitor blank; but you may take it from me that he was one of the shrewdest acquaintance with forms of "influence" which I have ever known.

"*June* 5, 1901.
"*Bay Tree Lodge,*
"*Frognal.*

"DEAR MR. CARNEGIE,

"I am constrained to write a line to thank you for what I saw and heard to-day. When I observed you with —— my heart sank. He is a good man, but he is an aristocrat from the beginning, and he knows nothing of the poor. I am nobody —nothing but a journalist—but I have known what it is to be very poor—and very proud—and my whole heart is with the poor to this day. If you will observe the tender consideration and regard for the poor which I saw in you to-day in the terms of your settled gift, you will have the blessing of Scotsmen to the end of time. I rejoiced also that the provision for scientific education will be kept in your own strong and even hands and not given over to the University Courts of Scot-

land—the most quarrelsome and impractical and the least democratic bodies in the world. I am not worthy to come under your roof—but my whole heart goes out to you. May God bless you.

"Yours sincerely,

"W. ROBERTSON NICOLL.

"I will send you this week's number of the *British Weekly*, in which you will see a few letters out of many received which will tell you how the true Scotland feels."

Meantime the Trust Deed, in terms of the letter of gift of May 18, went forward.

"If the deed goes through in its present form as I have sent it," I wrote to Dr. Ross on June 1 in a letter sending him detailed suggestions and revisals, "I am ready to fight for it through thick and thin and to put a willing share of my life into the Trust. Mr. Carnegie, assure him, need have no fear of that. If, on the other hand, the 'interests' knock it into a cocked hat, then—the scene is changed."

Would you believe it, dear, it turned out that the chances were 100 to 1 that the scene *was* to be changed, and that the design which had been dear to me from my youth, really a design of my life, was to be frustrated—intrigued to death.

Rather a shattering business, was it not, for your poor old

FATHER?

LETTER XXVII

NIGHTMARE AND AWAKENING

Craigmyle.

September 13, 1919.

MY DEAREST ISABEL,

Shall we just complete the University gift story? Well, here is the Fifth Act. Shall it be in the Shakespearean sense a tragedy—a gloomy triumph of adverse fate, or—in the same sense—a comedy, a drama with a happy ending?

Suddenly there came a message from Mr. Carnegie requesting my presence at Skibo. I wired that I was overwhelmingly occupied and could not go. He then proposed an intermediate meeting-place—I think Inverness or Aberdeen—but I had again to cry off. Then, through the intervention of Dr. Ross, a meeting was fixed. He came from Skibo to Dunfermline, and I sent back all my briefs for the day and went over to the old town, to the house of my old master.

Papers were laid out on the table. Mr. Carnegie took the head: I sat at the side. Dr. Ross sat apart on an arm-chair, not taking part in the discussion, but listening and watching keenly.

The start was abrupt and peremptory.

"Shaw," said Carnegie, "you have led me into a nice fix. I feel that I have been rather affronted. I now find that your scheme is no good."

I sat still for a moment, recognizing that he had been got at, and seeing at once that what it all meant was that those whom I will for short call "the inner ring" were no longer satisfied with having got half a million for their design: they would have none of my scheme. Having bagged the millionaire they were going to bag my million too—leaving free education, the great body of deserving, struggling parents, and myself—all, as the modern phrase is—all on the mat. A kind of tempest swept through my mind. I tried to think clear: there was much to be lost or much to be won.

"I am sorry to hear you say that," said I, "or think that anything I have ever said or done has put an affront upon you. I meant to make your name beloved for generations."

"The thing will not do," he broke in; "the help is not needed."

"Who told you that?" I challenged. "I know the kind that told you. Tell me this," I asked, "tell me this: has any one of these men that you have been colloguing with, has any one of them gone through the hards for education? Not one of them. I have. Who are they, to know whether help is needed? They do not know: they have not had the experience. I have: and I know."

He was unconvinced; but he was willing to parley. He spoke of the remission of fees as but a small part of the total oncost for the session; but—for beneath his resolute and dominating nature he had a kindly heart—he winced a little when I pictured the little, and sometimes big, gifts being sent from the farms and the crofts and the sheilings—the cheese, the potatoes, the oatmeal,

sent or taken to the very humble city lodging where the boy, lonely and indomitable, was struggling with the higher learning; how by this means the cost of living was reduced to a minimum; but the meeting of the hard cash of fees was cruel—and so on.

Although I was sure it had been well dinned into him, it is to his credit that he did not personally like—in short, rather revolted against—either the poverty test or the poverty appeal. And you should know also that by this time Lord Elgin had pronounced against the idea, and Mr. Arthur Balfour, at a meeting which the three of us and Ross had at the Scotch Office for revising the deed (I used the term, I remember, of turning the Trust into "a sublimated Poor's Board") expressed himself quite peremptorily in the same sense. But this is a digression.

Suddenly Mr. Carnegie broke in: "There is a better use for my money, and I have resolved on it—to equip the Universities."

The battery was unmasked. "To equip the Universities," I said; "you know that I favour that. Quite a good object"; and *I began gathering together and folding up my papers!*

"Shaw," he said, "what does this mean? Does it mean that you are not to be a trustee?"

"That is exactly," said I, "what it means. Your scheme is good, but it is not my scheme; you are building it in the air. I took you for a democrat"—his eyes blazed, but I went on—"and here you have been consulting with aristocrats and giving away endowments—right enough—but why not build on your democracy, get the people of Scotland on your side by giving them this free charter

that I want? Begin with them; trust them; build on that. Otherwise you will build on the air; closer and closer will these corporations grow." Then I stopped, thinking I had lost all by going too far. Carnegie sat in a sort of maze.

Then in the pause, and to his everlasting credit, Ross struck in, putting a point with a quiet and simple force. "Would it not be possible, gentlemen, to realize both your schemes?"

Carnegie looked at me; and I said, "I could have no objection to that: I favour both."

Then he too began gathering up papers. "You to get your million," he said.

"That would make things solid," I replied.

He continued: "The rest half a million for equipment."

"I don't scrimp that," said I; "not at all; the colleges will grow, and scientific things make a big item and growing."

"Let it be so," he said to the dear intervener. He and I stood up and shook hands. And I back to my briefs. He stayed all night in Dunfermline.

What happened next morning at the railway station was told to me by Dr. Ross. In stepping into his compartment Mr. Carnegie turned and—"Just give Shaw another half-million," he said; "I mean, a million for him and a million for the others." So the sum of the Trust endowment became ten millions of dollars.

Never was a Trust better officered. Lord Elgin was unwearied as a Chairman, resolutely loyal to the deed, considerate to the Universities, but preserving our independence; Sir William McCormick, as Secretary, very well able indeed to hold his own with the most learned bat-

talions. And for a model Treasurer who but Dr. Ross himself?

* * * * *

Shall I now write the epilogue? On the final settlement of the Deed, several of us came out of the Secretary of Scotland's room together, and of course the warm-hearted donor was being congratulated. He—little man—took Lord Balfour—big man—by the buttonhole, and said: "Reminds me of the Sunday School collection. Each scholar had to quote an appropriate text. Number One toddles forward, puts down his dime with 'Blessed is he that considereth the poor.' Number Two, with 'The Lord loveth a cheerful giver.' Then comes up Number Three, puts his dime in, and solemnly quotes his text—'A fool and his money's soon parted!'"

So, a happy ending.

Your fagged out

FATHER.

P.S.—Let me add to this letter a little postscript (October 28) as to what happened at Alloa the other day. I stayed the week-end at the Gean House and Dr. Ross motored along to Louise's from Dunfermline to get delivery of his papers and to hear these Carnegie letters. After hearing them intently, he modestly disclaimed my praise of himself, but: "On the merits?" said I. To which he replied: "Not a single word to alter. Not a word wrong."

S. OF D.

LETTER XXVIII

THE SACRED BATTLEFIELD

Craigmyle.
September 28, 1920.

My dear Isabel,

The guests have gone, and these are quiet days. Last Sunday a scholarly divine, speaking of "the still small voice," vouched a better translation to be: "in the sound of a great stillness." Just as we use the expression "darkness made visible," so, it seems, there is, upon high authority, such a thing as "silence made audible." It is true: I hear it: in this afternoon of brown and gold.

For some days I have been in "the sessions of sweet silent thought," recalling the commanding voice and mind and presence of one of the noblest men I ever knew—a great ecclesiastic, a great statesman, a great Christian, a great man.

Let us turn aside to look at him and the things he loved. I want you to see him and them as with my own eyes. So for a little you and I will speak no more of Parliaments or of affairs of State. We shall visit sacred ground—none the less sacred that it was a battlefield.

Principal Robert Rainy was at first to me a dweller apart. But as I was drawn, on quite a humble plane, more and more into the privilege of co-operation with him, my respect for him took on a warmer and a warmer colour.

This in the days of his advance and triumph. In those days he remained serene, steadfast, with a quick ascription of all to the Master he served, and himself an august lesson in true humbleness of mind.

But in the days of check, of defeat, of apparent overthrow and ruin, we were more closely in conference. Of a Sunday afternoon then, he used to come along, his mind loaded with care; and in the library at Abercromby Place we had much colloguing. But then also his serenity and steadfastness shone out as brightly as ever. You could not but discern upon him the lineaments of a great sorrow; yet there was the same ascription of all to a Divine leading, and again his humbleness of mind lent a noble elevation to his unwavering faith.

When I think of these things, of his faculty of swift intellectual penetration, of his rectitude, of his high courage; and, alas! when I remember how for years he was misinterpreted and loaded with obloquy, I feel, on the one hand proud, and on the other hand ashamed, of my country.

I have described to you in a previous letter my upbringing in the United Presbyterian Church. There can be no doubt about it: that robust, growing, fearless body of men seemed, on the one hand, to be veritable old Covenanters, but, on the other, to hold the keys of the future. Its two outstanding features were these: its belief in the spirituality of the Church, disentangled from State alliance, and independent of State endowment; and secondly, in the advance of the bounds of that spiritual Kingdom in accordance with the injunction of its Head. This body seemed thoroughly well able to go on its own. What need had it of Union?

Yet is not the question selfish, narrow, improper? The only point in such cases is and ought to be: What would be best for the Kingdom? It is a spiritual question and must receive a spiritual answer: in other words, Church Union must spring from spiritual affinity alone. If from anything else, the Kingdom will suffer. That was unquestionably the view of Cairns and of Rainy; I testify on the subject at first hand.

But what could these two men, and the Churches they represented, do when they realized—every year more clearly—that the outstanding features which I have just named did not characterize one Church alone, but characterized both, and that the lines of essential belief and duty in the two Communions were not merely parallel but were identical?

Both, of course, had difficulties. With Cairns it was in the region of the heart. Take a notable case: The annual Synod—a body 1,200 strong, a Minister and Elder from each congregation. The members of that body were direct and regular participants in legislative labour, and to them every year came, in a warm tide, the refreshing of a common inspiration. Was that to go, and go for ever? Few men and women outside of that Communion know what that meant to those inside of it—to those homes from Shetland to the Solway in which the sweet and sacred event of the Edinburgh visit was the axle of the year. These seem but simple annals: this is no letter to the proud. But go even now to remote country manses or farms, far away as Orkney or Cantyre, and you will see the lips of old men quiver as they talk of Synods past and gone. Where principle, as they saw it, led, there they needs must follow. But they gave up much.

Rainy's difficulties were more menacing: less human, more historical, more metaphysical. The vast majority of the Free Church saw the outstanding features as I have depicted them. And they felt the call of the Spirit as of a something living, moving, marching on. But a minority —small, steadfast to tradition, and rooted in the past, were not so minded. And that awful shadow descended —the connexion of the State with the Church—a connexion in or about which difference, disruption, disunion, had hovered in Scotland for over two hundred years. And when that shadow fell across the path, the minority, gathered mostly from the remote Highlands, stood stock still.

There was no practical question of their joining the Establishment—none whatsoever. The point of difference was a pure abstraction, conjectural, metaphysical. Imagine an Establishment free from the old taint which made it fall from grace at the Disruption, and also free from such modern taints as "human hymns": imagine all that: imagine, in short, an Establishment to their liking: then to favour that supposititious thing was to favour the so-called principle of Establishment!

Here was a something on which, as they conceived, their forebears had testified, not merely according to their lights, or according to the times, but as truth and truth for ever. And to yield on this point seemed to them infidelity to truth.

This was the problem with which the Free Church was confronted by its slender but rigid minority. It was the subject of learned and frequent debate. In that debate the United Presbyterians had, of course, no concern: no stranger could intermeddle. A certain wonder took posses-

sion of the onlooker, not only at the clash of argument upon what certain Church leaders had said, or unsaid, or really meant, sixty years before, but also at the more stupendous proposition that this, whatever it was, could fetter the Christian religion among men who believed that Christ alone was to be followed and He alone was Master "in His own House."

Travelling once by train with Dr. Rainy to some country meeting (we had a good many of these journeys together in those years), I ventured to allude to the difficulties in the handling of great masses of men divided by doubts or by honest differences of opinion.

He made me this answer, which I shall never forget:

"There are, concerning any great body or organization which is in general agreement on substantials, two things required of anyone who would serve it. One is to keep the mass together, avoiding, so far as may be, its disintegration or falling asunder: but yet to do this in such a way as always to help the mass forward, making its centre of gravity advance."

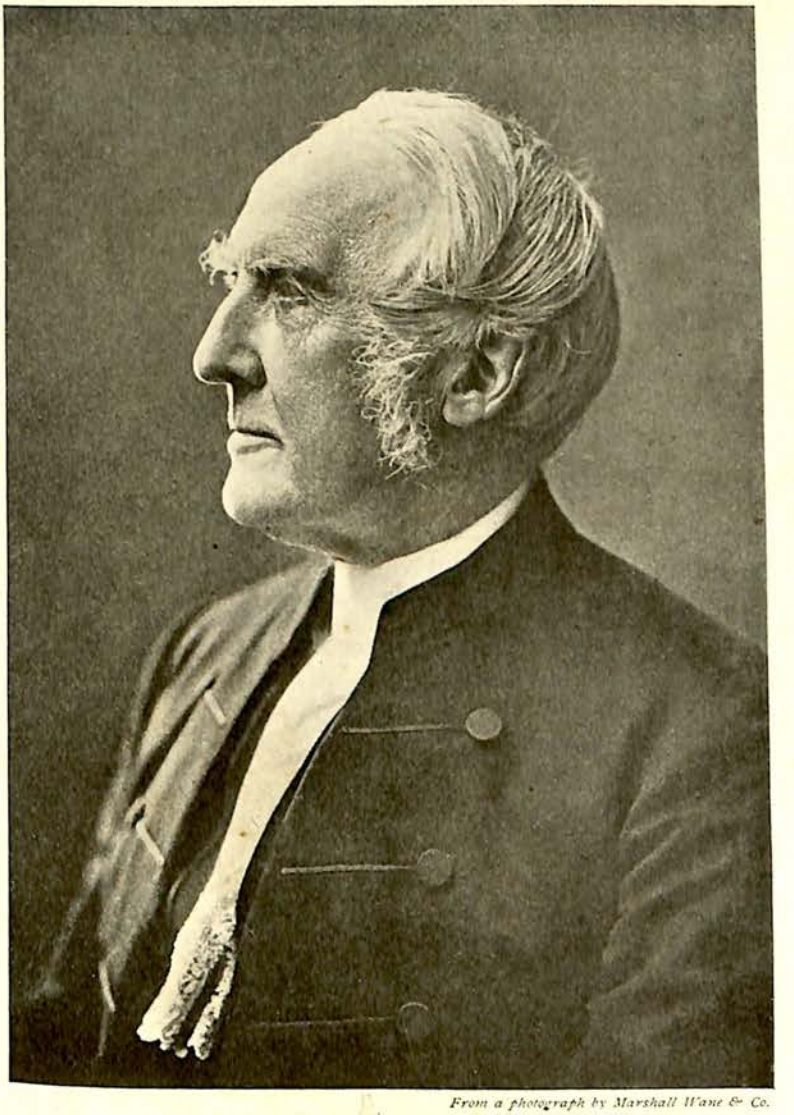
To this task he devoted himself with a power of moral conviction that the cause of Union was a dutiful homage to Jesus Christ. That was the touchstone of everything with him. I remember well giving a dinner in my Solicitor-General's room in the House of Commons in order that great Statesmen should meet the great Churchmen. Harcourt, Bannerman, Morley and others were there, and I purposely placed Rainy between Morley and myself. His massive dignity and his sweet urbanity impressed all. I watched particularly a discussion over some of Newman's views between him and Morley. Neither the one nor other

of these men was of the cavilling or belittling species, but I remember well with what a stately gravity Rainy summed up all: "Mr. Morley, I believe that John Henry Newman truly loved, truly loved, the Lord Jesus Christ."

And in that spirit his patience and persuasiveness, his labour and learning, were given in ungrudging measure. The Free Church majorities grew larger and larger: more and more it was seen that the differences between majority and minority were as plain as between marching and marking time.

Meantime the United Presbyterians—itself the fruit of many unions of smaller bodies—had remained staunch. The Free Church progress was now such that the coming transaction seemed to be abundantly justified. With the dawn of the new century the Union was consummated, and the United Free Church was formed in October, 1900.

Veritably the blessing seemed to be poured upon it in rich abundance. The processions from the Synod Hall of the one Church and the Assembly Hall of the other to the Edinburgh Waverley Market had an inevitable sadness, but the first vast gathering of the United Church was a memorable event. All Christendom took note of it, as an Evangelical alliance of the first magnitude. Scholars, divines, philosophers, also marked it. For Cairns and Orr were in the one Church, and the other was the Church of fearless thinkers who had met German theology on the level and fought it foot to foot, some like Robertson Smith and Bruce passed away, but others, like Lindsay and Dods and Rainy and George Adam Smith and Davidson and Denney, pillars of religion and scholarship whom every centre of learning at home or



From a photograph by Marshall Wane & Co.

PRINCIPAL RAINY.

abroad treated with deference and respect. Above all, the Union was marked by the hearty independence and zeal of a free democracy. This last a literal but very remarkable fact.

Yes. It was a democracy in which there was a real equality. No distinction in power between laity and clergy; nor among the laity between classes or ranks.

The event was of deep interest to thoughtful laymen of all classes and beliefs outside. Some, like Mr. Balfour, Mr. Haldane, and Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, openly rejoiced at it. Lord Rosebery did better—he was on the platform of its first General Assembly. The few with a journalistic twist who affected to scorn it only made men prize it the more.

Here and there in the England south of the Trent you would note references to uncouth gait or attire; and of course the accent of many came in for a slash. It must have been about this, I think, that Bannerman once remarked to me—he had a habit of humorous anger:—

"I suppose the Jerusalem Pharisees would have their fashionable joke about a Galilean accent."

Moving about in the great Assembly, I could hear the districts of Scotland mingling in talk, but the sense of difference in dialect disappeared in a warm, common purpose, just as in these later years it has done in the Great War, in Egypt and Palestine, or on those fields of Flanders and of France which have so often been watered by Scottish blood.

Have the twenty years that have elapsed since that event altered the current of reflection or belief? Do we

now think ourselves superior to such enthusiasms, such manifestations? If the current be different, is it a deeper or a shallower current?

The Union was accomplished. But there was a night of doubt and sorrow coming. But another day for that: let me close this at a point while the sun was still shining.

Your ever loving Father,

S. OF D.

LETTER XXIX

STORM AND SUNSHINE

Craigmyle.

October 3, 1920.

ISABEL MY CHILD,

You were but a child during those events, but, as you have told me yourself, you saw the two impressive processions which went, on October 31, 1900, to the great Waverley Market, and there formed, amid a sort of solemn acclaim, the great Union.

In that clear sky there was a cloud. It was no bigger than a man's hand. Within six weeks the sky was darkened and the storm broke.

On December 16 a Summons was issued at the instance of the small minority of the Free Church. How small it was you shall hear in a moment. But that was no matter; the argument, and case, and decision, would have been the same although the minority had consisted of one single man.

What were these "pursuers" submitting? They dared not challenge the Union as a spiritual association, or demand its rescission. That would have been—

"To force our consciences that Christ set free,"

a thing impossible in Scotland, and not attempted since the black epoch of the later Stuarts.

But they could challenge the right to property. The Free Church had foolishly favoured accumulation under

the names of capital or central funds. Curious it is how such Churches run to that. Loyal and enthusiastic commercial men in them favour that. But it is only safe within very strait limits. For it tends to remove liberality from the category of steady-going virtues and turn it into a deathbed affair. And from it spring dangers—danger of ease, danger of inward self-satisfaction, danger of outward attack. A Church's true reserves are not in such investments, but in "the unfathomable riches."

Of all those reserves and property the minority could claim the whole. This they did; roundly demanding that the Free Church which merged itself into the Union should be stripped of its "whole lands, properties, sums of money and others which stood vested in it" on October 30, and that when the next day it became part of a United Free Church it did so beggared of all its possessions. Its churches, manses, colleges, mission stations, schools, buildings, in this and many lands, its capital funds, down to the last sixpence—everything to be swept away by legal capture: nothing left to it except its soul.

For there was, according to these plaintiffs, no longer any Free Church except themselves, and those who "adhered" to them. They alone had been faithful; this they truly believed. All the others had been faithless; this also they believed. "We are the people, and wisdom will die with us"; all else was a remorseless logic. How to manage this? Search out the old beliefs or protestations of those who were leaders of the Disruption movement of 1843; piece these things—two generations old—piece them together, and then treat the result as a trust under the theory of "fundamental principles." Get a Court of Law

to uphold that; and all the rest follows; the law of the dead hand rules all; the law of the living spirit—that very essence of a Church of a Living Christ—signifies nothing.

You think that this was ridiculous, do you? Not at all. It was the law. You think it was ruthless, do you? Pray, what had the law to do with that?

The litigation lasted four years. The famous judgment of the House of Lords was pronounced on August 1, 1904. The prolix records of the case are available: far be it from me to attempt their epitome. The substance of the matter was what I have told you.

The Summons failed in both of the Houses of the Scotch Court of Session. The Scotch judges were unanimous. In the House of Lords the judges stood 3 against 3, it being an open secret that Lord Shand's decision, which was actually in writing, was for dismissing the appeal. But alas! he died ere judgment was pronounced. New judges were called in, and by a majority —Lords Macnaghten and Lindley dissenting—the Scotch decisions were reversed. Then the havoc began.

The first thing to be done was one in which I took a deep interest. As representing the United Presbyterians I had been charged with one of the leading Union resolutions in 1900, and along with Principal Rainy I had visited various centres promoting the cause. The question was—what would that fine brave United Presbyterian Church now do? Here was a thing in which she had legally no concern. Her principles had not been in issue: her property had not been at stake. All her material equipments, capital funds, buildings, churches, manses, stations, remained to her. What was her duty? Should she dis-

entangle herself from this quarrel which was no concern of hers, and go on with her old work like her old self? What was her duty?

She chose the better part. I shall never forget a great meeting of office-bearers in Edinburgh at which the decision was made that the Union should stand. The two sides of the question were fairly pointed out. But the advantages of "as you were" seemed as naught to these Christian men. Nothing else than spiritual affinity and a sense of what was best for the Kingdom—nothing else had made the Union: nothing else should undo it. "Seest thou thy brother in need?" asked one of the United Presbyterian speakers, and the response was from the heart. Our possessions were theirs: the lot and heritage were common. What God had joined let no man put asunder.

So that shadow fled.

Then there came a period of anxiety and unrest so long drawn out as to be a misery. The judgment of the House of Lords had to be applied. So application after application was made to the Courts, and the energy of lawyers was at the service of even the minutest minority in any congregation throughout the country, to secure property and funds and to dispossess the congregation as a whole from all. It mattered not that buildings had been erected by donors still living who protested against the diversion of their own sacred gifts away from the Church to which they clung. These are but single instances of extraordinary consequences, logical, ruthless, hard to bear.

The repetitions of such legal proceedings throughout the country began to sow the seeds of what might have been serious trouble. The law courts were kept busy. Was

Scotland again to be the scene, as so often it had been in her history, of open and violent defiance of the intrusions of the law?

About that time I received the following letter:—

"8, *Rosebery Crescent,*
"*Edinburgh.*
"*Wednesday*—22.

"DEAR MR. SHAW,

"There is a natural and growing indignation about the growing list of interdicts, and Presbyterians are talking of pressing for a suspensory bill and calling on the M.P.s for their district to take the question up.

"I should not at all deprecate speaking out and claiming deliverance. I am only afraid of Parliamentary action taking a shape that may lead to Government rebuff—I don't think that would improve our position.

"It is also to be considered that these interdicts—wicked as their effects are—constitute valuable object lessons. They show what the House of Lords judgment really means.

"What I usually say to people is, that they should not contemplate any Parliamentary action without consulting Asquith and yourself.

* * * * *

"Yours very truly,
"ROBERT RAINY."

This letter contained the substance of many communings. Naturally, Dr. Rainy would have done much to avoid Parliamentary intervention, but we agreed that it had to come, not to settle Divine things, but to undo this human intervention. I shared his plans as to the shape it would take.

I try to keep myself out of all this story. But, my dear, it is impossible. You will see how. After much consideration I telegraphed to Belmont, and Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman asked me to come on. I laid before

him the best I could make of it, told him that it would require far more than my brains and energy to induce or force a Government to accept it; there was my plan: what did he think? Would he and those he led support it?

He was at first non-committal. He joked: called me "owdacious" and all the rest of it, groping his way, putting points. We had two or three hours of it. Although still determined, I was feeling discouraged and depressed: but just as he was shaking hands he cheered me up by saying:

"Well, Thomas, it's worth a trial." He was heart and soul with me on the gross wrongs of the position; but as to the remedy, he was doubtful and uneasy. Yet I could see that he had no alternative plan, and what he had said was quite warrant enough for me.

I spoke in Galashiels on October 17, setting out the church difficulty and suggesting the way out. The newspapers were most generous in their space, and the address, reprinted, had a wide vogue. Letters poured in from all quarters, quite irrespective of party: and it was clear that the clouds were breaking.

I should mention that from the moment the judgment was pronounced it was plain beyond all doubting that the slender but successful minority—thereafter, of course, to be known as the legal Free Church—was saddled under Trust law with a sacred responsibility so vast that they were quite unable efficiently to discharge it. In these circumstances, an arrangement between the parties was attempted. It failed. The legal Free Church held that the laws of God as well as man put them in the position they occupied, and that to yield an inch was a sacrifice of principle.

So the conference ended in nothing. The Free Church would arbitrate nothing. They would not even agree to yield what they could not use; and their inability to work the mass of the churches they claimed was confessed in their proposal that the present occupiers should remain as caretakers. But even that was not to be allowed, unless at the same time those caretakers should also become spiritual bondsmen.

All over Scotland that was to be the spectacle—that Christian people were to yield the churches and manses which they in thousands had themselves built, to hold those properties as tenants-at-will of those who did not build them—and this on the understanding that they must only worship God on conditions set up by those who had bereft them of their possessions!

The facts were startling enough. Of the 1,104 congregations of the Free Church, how many stood out of the Union? Only twenty-six. What, then, if the 1,100 churches, and all the colleges, manses, stations, halls, home and foreign, were seized? Who was to undertake the work of the Master, yearly, daily, hourly, of which these resources were but the material shell and frame? Empty they must stand until living forces came into being to utilize them according to Disruption principles, and bound especially to the "principle of Establishment" as declared fundamental and perpetual by the House of Lords. And to stand empty was not Trust but breach of Trust. How could twenty-six men fill 1,100 pulpits?

In mission work the old Free Church was pre-eminent throughout Christendom. Her noble band of missionaries numbered one hundred, and each and all they stood by the Union and freedom. Were these mission stations,

colleges, schools, to be vacated and go to ruin, waiting the time when a trained ministry came along who would be sound on the principle of Establishment? How grotesque it all was!

If so as to men, what as to funds? The foundation of Free Church pulpit support was what was known as its Sustentation Fund, kept alive by voluntary annual offerings. In the year preceding the Union these offerings amounted to no less than £170,000. Of this the "legal" Free Church contributed how much? Only £2,900. No shame that it was small; but the point was how out of this slender amount was the vast work of the law-declared Trust to be fulfilled by its law-declared Trustees? It was manifest that the House of Lords judgment was unworkable, impossible, and I am not going to say any more about it. Upon that subject I delivered my soul.

Without doubt Scotland, which far and wide still cared for these things, was put into a difficult position. On the one hand, the law; on the other, the clamant facts; the chances of social disorder; above all, loss, disorder, mischance and mischief to the work and cause of Jesus Christ.

After all, it was a case for putting very plain facts in a very plain way; and it was their urgency which compelled the call which I ventured to make—a call for legislative interference to undo the disaster of judicial interference.

No trust can be allowed to lapse into a state of non-administration. Let there be loyalty to the law on the one hand, but also unflinching loyalty to the work of Christ on the other. That is the work for which the Church exists, and, if there is failure there, the law will step in.

I put the simple question thus: Should the successful litigants take more than they can successfully administer either now or in the reasonably near future? Whatever they cannot so administer, the law would declare should go to the nearest approximate object; and therefore, in nine cases out of ten, you would come back after years of heart-burning, anxiety, dispeace, loss, evictions and scandal, exactly to where you had started from—namely, that the present possessors, carrying on the nearest approximation to the objects of the trust, should be, as they should have been from the beginning, allowed to remain where they were.

What I pled for was drastic enough; but I felt sure that nothing less would bring peace in Church or State. It was this: to set the judgment of the House of Lords on one side; to put the existing havoc under immediate arrest by staying instantly all legal proceedings, and by Parliament itself lifting out of the hands of the parties the whole funds and property, amounting in value to millions of pounds sterling. Who to take it? A strong Parliamentary Commission. What to do with it? Why, my dear, to give it all back again; to distribute it among the parties; to take stock, not only of the judgment, but also of the manifest actualities of the case, and, above all, of the overriding obligation that the living work of the Evangel should not fail, that the true trust should not be broken, that wherever at home or abroad the little lamp had shone it should still hold on to burn.

Was this wild revolutionary stuff? Was it disrespectful to the House of Lords? Was it disloyal to the law? Or was it just plain honesty and common sense?

Well, it was in this last sense that the public and

Parliament and the Government took it up. I favoured —arbitration having been refused—the appointment of a Parliamentary Commission, armed with arbitrative and executive powers, charged with a settlement of all existing or prospective disputes between the two Churches; and I asked Parliament to set it up authoritatively as a Commission of Equity.

To those who hankered for precedent I cited Lord Westbury—for the lawyers, and—for the politicians—Sir Robert Peel.

The Government served the occasion as became enlightened men. And the Crown lawyers—Mr. Graham Murray and Mr. Scott Dickson—showed the grasp and grit which became their high office,—in this astonishing nobody who knew their worth and quality.

So all went well. The Elgin Commission was set up, worked with, shall we say, deliberation, giving, by the way, to the successful litigants measure full and to spare. Peace settled again over great spaces of country and great spheres of religious effort.

* * * * *

Here is a curious thing. Namely this: that of all that happened about the Parliamentary Bill my memory is a complete blank. I must have been deep in it; but I was nearly wrought to death with legal work, travelling in that Session alone, by rail and mostly by night, a distance equal to the circumference of the earth. And this Church-rectification business was high-strung work. I said plainly in Parliament on the Bill that the country which had not in the past feared the head that wore a crown was not in the least likely to quail before the head that wore a wig! And

as to these cruel interdicts I set the House astir by likening the position to a penny-in-the-slot machine, where you had only to drop in the House of Lords judgment and to pull out a Church. Morley affected to be scandalized; but when I rapped back at him:

> "Our indiscretions sometimes serve us well
> When our deep plots do pall,"

he was placated.

All the rest has completely passed from my mind. Once before the actual struggle I had said wonderingly to Principal Rainy that there might be a danger of such a colossal calamity as had occurred undermining good men's faith. He severely reproved me, reminding me of men's short-sightedness, of the need to be steadfast in adversity, accepting these buffetings as became humble believers in a supreme Wisdom. So we were drawn still more closely together.

The other day I fished out this letter from him, which I am venturing to send to you. I should rather tell the story myself, but I cannot remember it, and so you will excuse me falling back on the record of the saintly but too indulgent friend.

"3, *Tantallon Terrace,*
"*North Berwick.*
"*August* 10, 1905.

"DEAR MR. SHAW,

"In reporting at the Commission and speaking of members of Parliament, I named four who were in frequent consultation with us. I named you last that I might add some sentences as to our special obligations to you. I referred to your being a member of our advisory Committee, having the whole details at command—your Parliamentary position and experience—the universal impression of the judgment, good temper and firmness

with which you had handled matters, and that it was in your hands that the arrangement was reached in which the Bill became a matter of agreement among all parties in the House of Commons.

* * * * *

"I am, dear Mr. Shaw,

"Yours ever truly,

"ROBERT RAINY."

Will you please forgive this epistle, so long, so dull? But you have had to pay the penalty of demanding a full and plain account from

Your very devoted parent,

S. OF D.

* * * * *

P.S.—I should have mentioned that there was, as regards the judgment of the House of Lords, a widespread uneasiness as to whether the elementary fact had been before their Lordships' minds that the funds in dispute were not an endowment to which the Free Church had succeeded, but that, on the contrary, it had started absolutely penniless, that all that it possessed had been voluntarily subscribed and given, the great bulk of it in quite recent days, when the Church had cleared her testimonies and year by year made it plain that, to put it with moderation, it was not a whit bound by the principle of Establishment. I could not give such a doubt any place in my mind, but many people did entertain it.

Well, two years ago I read with amazement this account of the case by no less distinguished a friend than the late Lord Alverstone, Lord Chief Justice of England, who was one of the actual Judges on the Appeal. In his

"Recollections of Bar and Bench" he gives—writing not very long after the event—the following version of the case, which I have underlined and marked with points of exclamation at the spots of most astonishing singularity:

"In 1904 I was summoned to the House of Lords to be one of the Judges for the hearing of the re-argument in the dispute *between the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland and the Free Church!* Matters had been brought to a crisis; *the representatives of the United Presbyterian Church had attempted to eject and deprive of their offices certain Clergy of the Free Church!!*

"The first argument had taken place before the Lord Chancellor, Lord Shand, Lord Macnaghten, Lord Lindley and Lord Robertson. Lord Shand died before judgment was delivered, and, in consequence of a difference of opinion between their Lordships, the case was ordered to be re-argued, and Lord James of Hereford and I were summoned. The late Lord President, Lord Kinross, was also asked to attend, but he could not sit, as he had been consulted by some of the parties to the dispute. The case was argued largely on admissions made in the Record, *and the facts relating to the later history of the United Presbyterian Church were never before the House!!!* I only mention this because the criticisms after the judgment assumed that a great deal more evidence had been given than was actually the case. *In the result the action of the United Presbyterian Church was held to be illegal (!) and their endeavour to eject the Clergy from their cures and vicarages not to be justified!!!*"

Perhaps I should not, even to you, make any comment on all this? Fancy that version not only entering into the head of any man who had had to do with the case, but

appearing under his hand in black and white! A more lamentable lapse of memory never occurred, even in all the records of distinguished Judges. All the same, this in it, at least, is pretty hard to bear. The United Presbyterian Church were not even parties to the case. And this puts upon that body a course of conduct which, from the point of view of its principles, would have been nothing but baseness and a protracted treachery. And then "cures and vicarages"! There is an English puzzle for you; apply such language to such a case!

LETTER XXX

BOTHA AND SMUTS

9, *Bolton Gardens, S.W.*5.

July 6, 1920.

MY DEAR CHILD,

What think you of the following quotation, my Lady, as a preface to another letter? You know the passage well; and you remember how amidst the fun of the Biglow Papers we suddenly came upon it—startled by its width of vision, its statesmanship, its reverberating English! Lowell had the gift, rare in America, of aloofness and perspective where national issues are concerned; and so out of the Mexican imbroglio he read his countrymen a lesson, humorous, but very serene and very brave, and he made all of us, the world over, his debtors.

Let us hear again the famous words:

"We are inhabitants of two worlds, and owe a double, but not a divided, allegiance. In virtue of our clay, this little ball of earth exacts a certain loyalty of us, while, in our capacity as spirits, we are admitted citizens of an invisible and holier fatherland. There is a patriotism of the soul, whose claim absolves us from our other and terrene fealty. Our true country is that ideal realm which we represent to ourselves under the names of religion, duty, and the like. Our terrestrial organizations are but far-off approaches to so fair a model, and all they are verily traitors who resist not any attempt to divert them from this their original intendment. When, therefore, one would have us to fling up our caps and shout with the multitude: '*Our country, however bounded!*' he demands of us

that we sacrifice the larger to the less, the higher to the lower, and that we yield to the imaginary claims of a few acres of soil our duty and privilege as liegemen of Truth. Our true country is bounded on the north and the south, on the east and the west, by Justice. . . . That is a hard choice, when our earthly love of country calls upon us to tread one path and our duty points us to another."

The like of that doctrine was in our very bones. We were a minority, but a minority numbering many millions of our people, when in the autumn of 1899 the passions of men were being fanned into a flame for the destruction of the South African Republics.

Some weeks before hostilities broke out, I spent all the strength I had in the study of the diplomatic correspondence. After an analysis of it, made publicly, and point by point, I ventured so far as to make these declarations: (1) that the way to peaceful settlement was clearly open; (2) that war was avoidable; and (3) that an avoidable war must be an unjust war. Rightly or wrongly, I felt that for me this was solid ground, and that no inexpediencies, no unpopularity, no man alive, should shift me from it. Here was a case of squaring the elbows. There was trouble ahead—trouble and plenty of it. What then? "Turn every trouble into an adventure."

It is difficult for even the imagination to grasp how vivid were the ferocities which men and women cherished in regard to the policy of the South African War. The appeals for a calmer judgment were treated as symptoms of the traitorous mind. "I want," said one decent soul, "to bring this to the test of the Scriptures." "O, then," says the other, "you are a Pro-Boer!"

That was the common story, and it signified quite accurately the attitude of mind of the party of ascendancy

and their impatience of any appeal to reason. Even the signs of returning calm were suspect, and the ready invective of Mr. Chamberlain quickly whipped the waters again into a storm. Between that invective, on the one hand, and the dialectical skill of Mr. Balfour on the other, militarists both in and out of Parliament had the time of their lives.

Believing that their country's destiny was in the line of their policy, they naturally encouraged the belief that those who differed from them were worthy of but scant respect. In journalism they found their powerful megaphone, and in public discussions freedom grew less and less, and the epithets of "Traitor" and of "Friend of every country but your own" became the catch-words that evoked the cheapest of cheers in the vulgarest of assemblies.

Mr. Lloyd George had to escape from a gathering at Birmingham disguised as a policeman. In my much humbler sphere I dare say thousands would have been very glad to see me hanged at the nearest lamp-post.

Every motive—of convenience, of self-interest, of comfort, pointed to our swimming with the stream, and had we done that we should have been certain that we were wrong.

Events have, of course, been overruled for good; but I go so far as to believe that the forces of advanced Liberalism saved the Empire. After the passion of the war, they swept its authors from power, and in the working out of a peace they inspired the grant by Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman of a Constitution for South Africa.

Lest they should fade from my mind, I will tell you five things which are memorable in this connexion —one as to General Botha; another as to General Smuts; a third as to carrying a challenge of martial law to the very steps of the Throne; a fourth as to Edinburgh and its defence of liberty; and a fifth as to your own home.

* * * * *

As to General Botha. How well I remember the discussions as to Chinese labour! The war, of course, was over; but this and other problems, and, above all, the lack of self-government, kept South Africa a land of unrest and running sores.

I had gone over the Blue Books on the labour subject, and was charged by "C.-B." to lay the matter before the House of Commons by open challenge. The speech was afterwards published and had a wide circulation, and, I suppose, has gone the way of all fugitive literature. Bannerman, Morley and others were by my side; John Burns, Lloyd George and others were watching below the gallery, Burns' great lungs punctuating the storm, the development of which was watched with acute and critical eyes by clever men in the Government and on the bench opposite.

All that is neither here nor there, but the point is that I cited Botha on the floor of the House of Commons, saying plainly that I reckoned him a most responsible witness and that, if nobody would speak up for him in that House, I would do so myself.

I am not going to bore you in these letters by quoting political speeches; but you must let me off if I quote to you just this sentence or two in defence of the great

General and Statesman. The date I see is the 17th of February of the year 1904.

"I wish," I said, "to tell the Colonial Secretary frankly that I do not think it makes for harmony in the relations of one race to another to use such language as he employed last night with regard to General Botha, who was spoken of in terms which implied and expressed that he had suppressed evidence. There was a suppression of evidence, but it was not suppressed by General Botha. General Botha had actually prepared a written statement of the evidence he was willing to lay before the Commission appointed to investigate the shortage of labour, but when he tendered that evidence they declined to receive it. . . . One of the Commissioners asked why the statement offered by General Botha had not been accepted. Then the Chairman said that that statement had been handed to him that morning, and he had had representations made to him. 'It was impossible to ask him to delete certain portions of it,' said the Chairman, 'as it mainly dealt with the question of Chinese labour, which is not before us.' With regard to this, all I will say is that it does not lie in the mouth of the Government which sanctioned the institution of a Commission so carefully limited, either to hustle the House of Commons, or to make any reflection or suggestion of suppression of evidence against this honourable man—an honourable friend and an honourable foe—General Botha."

As it turned out, Botha's views, derided though they were, proved full of good sense. This defence of him, however, riveted the sincere friendship which, though parted as we were by the wide seas, I knew him to entertain for me.

At a time when the real peace was accomplished a great transformation of opinion in this country was witnessed, and, while the Pro-Boers may not have become popular, the persons who undoubtedly did were the Boers themselves! General Botha visited this country then, and he was well received in the highest quarters. I remember

well a little dinner given by Mackarness, when there were half a dozen of us or so to meet him: in journalism, Massingham; in Parliament, Lloyd George and myself; and I think also—but of this I am not quite sure—that Sydney Buxton was with us. Anyhow, after the dinner, and before we parted, George and I said to Botha a word or two as to the political battles that had been fought, and Botha replied, "Gentlemen, you need not think it likely that I shall ever forget what Liberalism has done for Africa."

The remainder of the story I have from Botha's own lips. Shortly after the death of Lord Courtney—dear friend, great economist, deep thinker, moral and political stalwart—shortly after his death your mother and I visited Lady Courtney, and who should come into the room but General and Mrs. Botha? I reminded him of the little dinner, and he said he remembered it well. Then he added:

"Do you know that at that time Arthur Balfour asked me to lunch, and after lunch he asked a private word with me. You had just passed the Bill granting a Constitution to Africa through Parliament."

"I remember well," said I, "Arthur Balfour in the House of Commons, visibly suiting the action to the word, and saying that he would wash his hands of it. And as for Milner, he took the line, openly, that he would spew it out of his mouth."

Let me here interrupt Botha's story to interpolate this, that I have not been able to verify these expressions, although I cannot get it out of my mind that they were used. But the Parliamentary record shows that they are far from exaggeration; they seem within the mark. How

odd the reading is! Lord Milner's portentous gravity—that—

"mischief has been done which can never be retraced,"

and that—

"it is too soon after the events of the last few years to run the risk of seeing the whole executive power in the colony transferred to the hands of men who must at present be totally out of sympathy with the British institutions which they will nevertheless be called upon to work."

And the names of Generals Botha and Smuts were used to whet the edge of fear!

This timidity and distrust took a wilder argumentative form when Mr. Balfour took the floor.

"No human being ever thought of such an experiment before—that of giving to a population equal to and far more homogeneous than our own, absolute control of everything civil and military. There is nothing to prevent the country making every preparation, constitutionally, quietly, without external interference, for a new war."

He wound up by roundly declaring—

"I am astonished that any Government or any Party that cherished the British connexion in the Transvaal should desire so audacious an experiment to be tried,"

and by denouncing the grant at such a time of a Constitution to South Africa as—

"the most reckless experiment ever tried in the development of a great colonial policy."

Think of that now! In politics is there not the whole diameter of distinction between Courage with Vision, and Timidity without it? Tell me, when you come to consider it, who are the true Imperialists?

Now let us get back to Botha, and the talk with Mr. Balfour after lunch.

"O, I remember," said Botha, "how they committed themselves; and when Balfour spoke to me he said,

"'Well, Botha, you have done it; you have got your Constitution. What will come of it? Who can tell? What will you be up to next?'

"I said to him, 'Mr. Balfour, I believe that in five years' time I shall return to this country to ask for the Confederation of South Africa.'

"'No,' replied Mr. Balfour, very vehemently to me, 'the thing is impossible, is incredible.'

"'Well, we shall see,' I answered; and so we parted."

There was a pause, and then Botha resumed:

"And so it came about that, sure enough, in five years' time I *did* return, bringing with me the Confederation of Africa. Mr. Balfour was good enough again to ask me to lunch, and again he asked me for a few words privately afterwards. He said to me,

"'Well, General Botha, this is an extraordinary situation; you have done it again; you have got Confederation.'"

"What happened then?" said I.

"O," he said, "I just said to him:

"'Mr. Balfour, will you wash your hands of that?' and he replied to me,

"'Not very likely.'"

So the whirligig of Time goes round and round.

* * * * *

Would you like now to hear my little story about Smuts?

I think that some things—our attitude through the war, our positive declinature to have opinion stifled—were, of course, well known in Africa, and when General Smuts returned to this country as the representative of South Africa in connexion with the Great European War, he and I were naturally drawn together. I think General Smuts is himself a very great lawyer, and that his powers in that respect have never been fully put to the proof.

At the time of my making his acquaintance I was writing a large and complicated judgment dealing with the foundations of freedom and of those constitutional things which underlay the roots of the question whether any subject of this realm could, even by the authority of the King's Council, be imprisoned without a trial.

As I stood alone, I am bound to conclude that I took the wrong view. After the subsidence of that passion for expediencies and short-cuts which a time of war produces I wonder how the same problem would have fared. Right to be docile, of course; but—I wonder! Anyhow, twelve judges were on the one side and I was on the other.

Well, the point about Smuts is this. He was, as a young man, a distinguished student of the Middle Temple and had held high legal office in Africa. My own election as an Honorary Bencher of that Inn was, as I still feel, one of the most gracious and beautiful things that were ever done to me within the sphere of the law. There is no such organization in the North; and, a stranger, I was inducted into a goodly fellowship which reaches the point of companionship both with the Bench, and with the Bar, upon whose advocacy I lean so much, and more and more. Using my privilege I asked General Smuts to dine as my guest at the Middle Temple.

England was reverberating with his statesmanlike utterances on Imperial topics. As our guest he won all hearts; and in a few weeks he too was made an Honorary Bencher. It was, I think, at that very dinner that my mind was sizzling over with the big constitutional task on which I was engaged. So I broke the ice and I discussed this very judgment with him. He saw the crux of the case in a moment, and informed me that the same point had been settled in a case decided in the Privy Council on an appeal from Pondoland. I asked the date, and he gave me the date within six months. I turned up the Reports and found that he was right in every particular, and a page or a page and a half of that judgment is really in that way the work of General Smuts rather than of myself.

Now here is something far more important. Listen. General Smuts one evening, after I had had him to dine, with the Lord Chancellor and some of the great Judges, in Palace Gate, disclosed to me what had happened in the fateful Conference at Vereeniging, when the question of the continuation of the war and the achievement of peace with South Africa was hanging by a thread.

They discussed far into the night. Lord Milner was obdurate—I think Smuts's words were, "He was impossible." When all hope seemed lost, Smuts felt himself gripped by the elbow and, looking round, he saw Lord Kitchener, who whispered to him: "Come out; come out for a little." The two of them left the Conference and they paced outside back and forward through the dark.

Kitchener and Smuts were both well aware of the accumulating horror of a long guerrilla warfare. They were both sincerely anxious for an arrangement. And then Kitchener said to him,

"Look here, Smuts, there is something on my mind that I want to tell you. I can only give it you as my opinion; but my opinion is that in two years' time a Liberal Government will be in power; and if a Liberal Government comes into power it will grant you a Constitution for South Africa."

Said Smuts, "That is a very important pronouncement. If one could be sure of the like of that, it would make a great difference."

"As I say," said Kitchener, "it is only my opinion, but honestly I *do* believe that that will happen."

"That," said General Smuts to me, "accomplished the peace. We went back, and the arrangements at the Conference were definitely concluded, and the war came to a close."

Now, as I was saying, I have three other instances illustrative of the spirit of those times—one about an appeal to the Throne, one about Edinburgh, and one about your own home—but it is time you were off to your violin, and you can leave your old father in his den.

Off with you!

Your loving

FATHER.

LETTER XXXI

"ABOVE THIS SCEPTRED SWAY"

9, *Bolton Gardens*, *S.W.*5.

June 24, 1920.

ISABEL MY DEAR,

I do not know that it is possible to make you realize the extraordinary length to which the creatures of the militaristic spirit were at that time led in regard to the South African War—to its inception, to its conduct, to its consequences. Their impatience of criticism was beyond belief. The Olympian tone which in Press and in Parliament and in private life they adopted towards those who wanted even to maintain the elementary principles of international law was a spectacle for gods and men. It quite maddened such people when some of us declined to be awe-struck.

Of this I will give you an instance. Just in the middle of the war sinister rumours were afloat as to our doings in the name of martial law; and suddenly the death of Scheepers rang through the world. He was known to have been an able and powerful enemy openly in the field against us. He was taken prisoner, tried by a military court, and to all intents and purposes shot out of hand. I believe the case not to have been creditable either on the martial or the judicial side. And the suddenness and swiftness of the procedure made some of us resolve that

we should go through a good deal ere the like of that, if we could help it, should happen again.

Almost at the same juncture, however, word reached this country that General Kritzinger, a capable and honourable military leader, had been brought from prison for trial by martial law. That is to say, the very same story over again seemed about to be enacted—a man tried by his enemies on charges rapidly and probably very imperfectly canvassed, and swiftly sent to his doom.

The Minister of War of that day was Mr. Brodrick, an apparently whole-hearted sympathizer with military methods, and a quite contemptuous person with regard to those who were critical of them. Questions were put in the House of Commons. The Government was asked: What were the charges upon which General Kritzinger was being tried? It declined to tell. At what date was the trial to take place? It declined to say. Would the House of Commons have an opportunity of interposing in the matter in the event of Kritzinger being sentenced to death? It declined to give any word of satisfaction. The Government was on its high horse and the horse was at the gallop.

There was a meeting at Essex Hall one afternoon just then, a meeting of people who declined to be either submissive or overawed in face of these official on-goings, and who were quite willing to adopt any course within reason which would make the War Office call a halt.

Just let me, for example, interpose this, to show to what a pass public opinion in England had come. Alas! we knew well, but, as it turns out, not well enough, that a certain side of the Liberal party was soaked with mili-

taristic Imperialism. The horrors of martial law could not rouse it.

One thing proves this. I did not know it at the time, or it may have escaped my memory. But Mr. Gooch's "Life of Lord Courtney" establishes it. He quotes a letter addressed by Courtney on the 13th February, 1902—a letter to Lord Rosebery, asking him to speak up for Kritzinger in a speech next day at Liverpool:

"There may be legal arguments," he wrote, "to defend the execution of Scheepers. There were overwhelming legal arguments to defend the execution of Ney; but it has been condemned by history, and we have always been proud to believe that the Duke tried to prevent it. Let not Kritzinger undergo the same fate as Scheepers! The scheme of executing these enemies is surely too sophistical and too odious to beguile your judgment, and a word such as you can say might serve to relieve us from the condemnation of Kritzinger's murder."

The appeal was unsuccessful. In Mr. Gooch's words, "Lord Rosebery replied that unrestricted authority must be given to the man on the spot."

Well, it was in circumstances such as these that the Essex Hall meeting was held.

The gathering was crowded, and those there were all in a state of deep and, it may be, inflammable anxiety. My own blood was up; I reflected in a sentence or two on the Scheepers procedure and then told them of what was being done in the Kritzinger case. We were able to affirm nothing as to guilt or innocence, but surely we were entitled to have the judicial decencies observed in the issues of life and death. I told them about the refusals in the House of Commons, and it required no words of

mine to make them realize the desperation of the position. I then broadly advised them to make no further appeal to the Government, to make no further appeal to the War Office, to make no further appeal to the House of Commons, but to go straight to the King himself. There was a storm of excitement, and it was there and then resolved that they would do that very thing.

Channing (afterwards Lord Channing), H. J. Wilson (a high principled and fearless English Liberal) and myself were appointed a Committee, with instructions, if you please, to go ahead and to take what I had recommended as the only possible course. At the close of the meeting we three looked at each other, and we said, "Now, how can we do it?" We walked up to the Reform Club together and Channing communicated with the Court officials, and discovered that His Majesty was then on a visit to Lord Burton in Derbyshire; so we sat down and composed a long telegram to King Edward. Channing was a Privy Counsellor; I was a King's Counsel; if I mistake not, Wilson also was a Privy Counsellor, but that event might have come later. However, we were what you might call responsible men—two of us afterwards Peers, and all three afterwards Privy Councillors—and we began our telegram by presenting our humble duty to His Majesty, and after narrating briefly the circumstances of Kritzinger's case, we implored the Sovereign to exercise his Royal prerogative so that the reputation of British justice and the good name of the Empire might not suffer a stain. Off went the telegram.

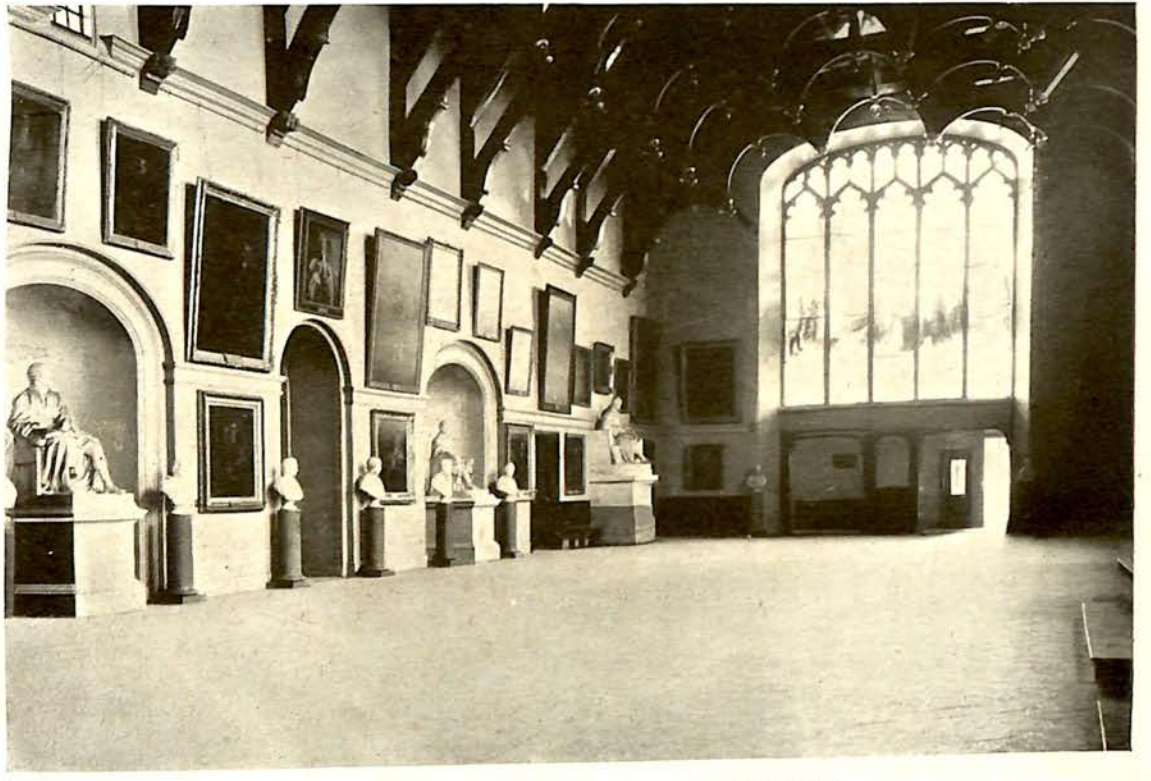
Then a curious thing happened. The telegram was not ignored. On the contrary, a letter was received from Knollys (afterwards Lord Knollys), His Majesty's Private

Secretary, telling Channing that he must know, of course, that the sending of such a telegram ought to have been, not direct to His Majesty, but through a Minister, yet doing this in such a way as not to leave us without hope. To this we frankly replied that we knew the course we had adopted was irregular, and that we deliberately meant it to be so, because the circumstances were such as to have made us lose all belief in the channel of approach to the Crown to which he had referred; that what we wanted to get at was that the King himself should know what was going on. In order, however, to save the position, we had had pleasure in forwarding a copy of our telegram to the King to the Secretary for War.

The affair did not end there. We got a note from Knollys saying that His Majesty was pleased that we had forwarded the communication through a Minister, and there the matter stopped.

Was the door of justice and of mercy shut? Not a bit. In a week or two news came from South Africa that Kritzinger's trial was delayed for a few weeks. We waited; and both in Africa and in Britain many waited with curiosity and anxiety. Then the trial *did* come on. It was apparently conducted with deliberation, and it lasted, I think, three days. At the conclusion the Court unanimously found Kritzinger not guilty, and he was dismissed. Then, as I heard the account, he was recalled so that each member of the Court might have the opportunity of shaking hands with so distinguished and honourable a foe.

That is the story, my dear, to the best of my recollection. Who would not love King Edward after that? You know the lines about mercy being enthroned in the hearts of kings, but the lines come short a little when they talk



THE PARLIAMENT HOUSE OF EDINBURGH.

From a photograph by The Lord Dunedin.

about mercy seasoning justice. It often does more than that. In many, many cases mercy is Justice itself. It was to a monarch in whose heart mercy was truly enthroned, and of the reputation of whose people through the war he considered himself to be the ultimate trustee—it was to such a monarch that this highest appeal to British justice was made and did not fail.

It is late, but the daylight still floods the long still evening. God bless you!

Your loving

FATHER.

LETTER XXXII

EDINBURGH AND FREEDOM

9, *Bolton Gardens, S.W.*5.

July 8, 1920.

MY DEAREST ISABEL,

You are not old enough to remember, but your brother and your sisters to some extent do, these "nearer home" touches which I am going to give you about the period of the African War.

The old Liberalism of Scotland was sagging, and when Lord Rosebery headed the Liberal Imperialism Movement, and thereafter the formation of the Liberal League, he carried with him many very able men who upon the whole on almost every topic inclined to the old Whig rather than to the modern Radical side. Yet they made no headway, and not even the power of Lord Rosebery's eloquence could guide the movement of feeling upon the part of the great mass of liberally-minded men in the country.

This is a part of general history; and with that I shall not weary you. In Edinburgh the dissatisfaction with such guiding, however, took the form of an uprising by the young men, who formed what was known as the "Young Scots' Society," and who were inspired by a clever and daring political thinker and writer, Mr. Hector MacPherson, of the Edinburgh *Evening News*.

A few of us, including dear Arthur Dewar (afterwards

Lord Dewar), a Mr. John Blair (one of the ablest lawyers in Scotland) and myself, gave open countenance to the operations of the Young Scots, and the fun began. Mr. Hogge, now a Member for Edinburgh, was near the centre of the actual organization, always alert and active in every way, and never afraid to be in the crown of the causeway.

Nearly everybody lectured to them who was of importance as a leader of opinion either in England or in Scotland, and the movement spread rapidly to other towns, and even south of the Tweed.

Mr. Merriman, a former Prime Minister of the Cape, was in England with Mr. Sauer, to put the rational case, as they viewed it, of South Africa before the public mind. An effort was made to get Mr. Merriman to come to Edinburgh, and the proposal was derided with hootings. Every hall that could be thought of was refused, and it was clear that free speech was to be put on its trial.

A vote was taken in the Town Council as to whether the Waverley Market (a great flat building, capable of holding many thousands and of being the scene of rough enough exploits, it was true) should be let on the application of these young blades. It was their only chance to get a meeting, and there was keen division in the Town Council. But the engagement of the hall was ratified, ominous enough statements being made as to its glass roof, its convenience for missiles from the street, and all the rest of it.

And then public opinion began to be stirred up to unquestionable mischief. The managing men in the Society came to me and told me that they expected that there would be serious disturbance.

I asked if that meant that freedom of speech in Edin-

burgh and in Scotland was dead. They said it looked very much like it.

"Very well, then," said I, "go on."

"Will you still take the chair?"

"Of course I will," I said.

The same doubts afflicted Mr. Merriman. Two days before the meeting he wrote to me that there was much discussion in London as to the gathering, and as it was clear that there would be more riot than good come of it, he was advised by his friends in the Reform Club that he should not come.

To this I replied by telegram:

"Regret you break your engagement: Meeting goes on."

So he came.

He was to arrive at the Waverley Station, but there were crowds in waiting to give him a hot reception, and some of us met him, and quietly conveyed him out by the far end of the station and had him off to my house in a cab.

It was impossible for us to force a way to the meeting through the crowds. The whole surroundings of the Waverley Market were crammed with people, numbering many thousands—some said 20,000, but I believe 10,000—out for disturbance, and kept back with difficulty by mounted police. We had anticipated this and had arranged for getting access to the Market by the extreme east end of the railway station. We approached the market by a private door at its south-east corner, giving a preconcerted signal on reaching the door. It was opened to us, and we slid into a side room and heard the bedlam in the main hall.

I was then told what had been done. There was a large meeting assembled, and the majority, it appeared, had come to the hall armed with sticks. They had, however, been denied access unless they consented to be disarmed, and this they did, till I suppose there never was in Edinburgh such an accumulation of thick sticks heaped up together inside or outside any apartment. Notwithstanding this disarmament, machinery for noise and display, enough and to spare of it, remained. Hand-organs and thunderous bass voices, with the waving of Union Jacks and the yelling of "Rule Britannia!" made the chances of a deliberative assembly somewhat thin.

On the other side, the only weapon which the promoters of the meeting had was one, but it was a clever one. It was a little one-leaf pamphlet, which I think our friend Mr. Blair must have been the author of—I certainly was not—containing a statement of the law, brief, clear and accurate, as to the rights of those holding a public meeting against the disturbers of it.

It turned out that a gathering of over two hundred men had pledged themselves to see that the meeting would be allowed to be held, and the disturbers would first be warned and then bodily carried out.

As we approached to the platform, the yelling and disturbance were a sound to hear and a sight to see. When I rose we had an extra dose of "Rule Britannia," in which the platform joined, and I whipped out my watch and ostentatiously put it in front of me.

On went the bedlam. And then gradually the meeting discerned that the worst of the disturbers were disappearing. Standing there, with my finger on my watch,

and the roaring all around, I watched the proceedings, and they were very interesting.

The defenders of the meeting were in posses of six. One of them approached a man who was bellowing like a bull in a field, touched him on the shoulder, and asked him if he would be so kind as to allow the meeting to proceed. In no case that I saw was this request complied with. On the contrary, the questioner was replied to with insults which, not to put too fine a point upon it, were unparliamentary. Then the disturber was gripped—one man taking one leg and another another, one taking one arm and another another—and laid out horizontally, the fifth man leading the way, and the sixth man supporting the head behind. Out they went, each success provoking a mixture of feelings and of outcries.

I deliberately allowed this to go on, knowing what was to happen. I was aware that the managers of the meeting had informed the police that they meant to see freedom of speech preserved in Edinburgh, that they meant to keep within the law, and that they trusted to the police preserving the peace.

At twenty-five minutes past eight Mr. Merriman, who was sitting with his body rocking and his head in his hands beside me, said,

"O Mr. Shaw, Mr. Shaw, stop it! This will never do. Let us give it up."

"Not a bit," said I to him, in the midst of the hubbub; "we are getting on first-rate."

So he held himself together for another ten minutes. I then called out in a loud voice to the Chief of the Police, and asked him to bear witness that we had been thirty-five minutes trying to exercise our rights as citizens in the

practice of free discussion, and that we were being deliberately prevented from the exercise of those rights by disturbers of the peace.

Thereupon a great calm fell upon the gathering, for from a side door there emerged a posse of two or three hundred policemen, who walked round the outskirts of the assembly, gradually enclosing it, until a ring of police put the operations of the disturbers manifestly under surveillance. The effect was immediate. Hundreds of them rose, gathered themselves together, and poured out of the hall, their exit being cheered to the echo by all friends of the meeting.

The speeches then began, I recommending plainly that the affair should be made like Paddy's blanket by taking the thirty-five minutes that had been cut off the top and fastening them on to the foot!

It added no little to the success of the gathering that Mr. Merriman's dispassionate speech was far too moderate for the occasion. It was not fiery enough for those in the meeting, and it totally deprived the opponents in the Press of any defence for declining to hear such a well-reasoned, thoughtful contribution to a great public issue.

After we got home, which we had to reach again by detour, we found that an attempt had been made to attack my house. A large gang of roughs had, however, fled from the scene when, at a signal from Alexander, your brother, who made a sprint out in front of them when they were going down the hill, the police, who were on the spot, lined up across the street. The attack was not repeated, but the police kept their posts till well on in the morning.

Really, I was not aware of the importance of it all

at the time. I was in fact deeply engaged in a heavy law case, and when I resumed a cross-examination the next morning, the learned judge, a good Tory, looked at me with a twinkle in his eyes. Secretly, I believe every respectable Unionist in the country was glad that things had gone as they did. People from all parts wrote to me of the public value of what they were pleased to call the fidelity and the courage that must have animated the Society in its vindication of a big constitutional right.

The Press was in a state approaching apoplectic spitfire!

* * * * *

Then, dear Isabel, here is another thing which you were not told for many years afterwards, but which happened in the home in Abercromby Place, and which I may entitle—

"WHO WAS THE BURGLAR?"

How can I describe to you that ferment of mind into which great masses of people were worked up, against those who challenged the militaristic policy. Nothing was too bad for them to believe of us. Insulting messages, black flags, a hundred-fold use of the cowardly postcard, false applications for passports to Holland, and all the apparatus of meanness and invective were an everyday occurrence. But we simply held on and refused any sort of intimidation. A convenient idea was, for instance, that your worthy and respected father was in the pay of Kruger! What man or newspaper ever began it I never was at the trouble to find out; but there were, of course, plenty of people, crazy with political prejudice, who took it for Gospel.

And so, when we returned from our holiday one autumn day, I began dealing with my accumulated correspondence. My shorthand clerk sat down at the library table, and just as the dictation began, he said to me:

"Excuse me, Mr. Shaw, but the drawers of your desk are all broken open."

"What!" said I.

And we looked, and there they were, every drawer on both sides in the huge desk burst open with a jemmy! The locks were still sticking out, but the woodwork had been wrenched away. More than that, every official or official-looking box was also wrenched open—boxes such as that containing my appointment as a Deputy-Lieutenant, my appointment as Solicitor-General, and the like!

Then we went through the house. The same thing had happened all over it. The dining-room sideboard was wrenched open. Even in the breakfast-room, the little tin box in which the children put their pennies had been burst open. Nothing through the house that might seem to have contained secrets or papers—nothing had been missed.

Then we returned to the desk, and found that it was pretty plain that every document had been carefully searched.

Not an article in the house was stolen!

The police were sent for, and it was discovered that the burglars—I suppose we must call them political burglars—had got access to the house through a skylight, and, we being away, had had a free run of the premises.

I remember well the Chief Lieutenant saying to me with oracular solemnity:

"Mr. Shaw, this is no ordinary burglary."

"It is not," said I.

"Mr. Shaw," he added, "this is a political matter."

"It is," said I.

"Sir," he said, "this needs careful investigation. I wonder whether it is connected with——" A particular street in Edinburgh. (I decline, my dear, to give you the name of that street, or even its shape.)

I said to him, "Now, officer, you must keep this quiet, absolutely quiet. Murder *will* out. Let us keep our eyes and ears open."

I was quite wrong. That murder never came out. I hope the poltroons are still alive, but, if not, God rest their bones! To not a soul in these trying years did I mention the event. I was a busy man!

I was, however, really disturbed about your mother. The sweet sanctity of her home invaded: and many of the things that were dear and cherished scrutinized and tossed about or torn up! She associated such conduct with desperadoes, and I could not quite persuade her that they were only cowards. But she, who had sustained me in these difficult years, bore this also with a quiet heroism which is just part of herself. Be good to her: Be good to her!

Your loving

FATHER.

LETTER XXXIII

FROM REPRISALS TO RECONCILIATION

9, *Bolton Gardens, S.W.*5.

November 10, 1920.

ISABEL MY DEAR,

Since I have come to town, the main topic, if not of discussion, at least of public uneasiness, has been what are called " Reprisals." I mean, of course, what has been going on in Ireland at the alleged hand or instigation of the Government. Well, you will have your own opinion about all that, I dare say : so have I. But the only bearing which it has upon my pledge to you about letters is that it brings other notorious cases of Reprisals to my mind.

Besides, you have seen how much of those years in the Wilderness was occupied with South African affairs : so I may just as well write you another word or two on the same topic ; and ere we are done with it you will find that we are back to Westminster again and in the company of that one of our circle who was our most beloved of public men.

People talk of reprisals as if some new horror had been invented in the department of war, as if some new cleverness, defiant of military rules and of honourable traditions, had come into play. Believe me, there is nothing of this sort about reprisals. The Law of Nations against them has been clear beyond question for at least over a century ; but war is such an inflamer of passions that it tramples

into dust traditions and regulations and international conventions and all the provisos that nations at a time of peace and reason seek to set up. Oblivion enshrouds all these, and humanity yields to something so savage as to make us ask ourselves whether, after all, progress and civilization are not verily at an end.

Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman had been for years Secretary for War, and he knew not only the international rules but the provisions of the military "Red Book." When I spoke to him, accordingly, and spoke very anxiously, on the subject of Lord Roberts' Proclamations, I was speaking to a skilled ear. I told him how uneasy I was as to the whole of the on-goings in South Africa under these military and administrative Orders, and how my fear was that gross violations of the Law of Nations had been and were being perpetrated. He encouraged me to make a thorough study of the subject, and I did this to the best of my power; and no voice was more hearty than his in commendation of the line I took in April of the year 1901.

I was speaking to an extremely hostile House of Commons, but, I am bound to say, to an extremely attentive one, and there was no violation of courtesy.

Catch me treat you in a letter to that speech. Hansard has it, and some of the societies printed it and sent it round.

But, as I was saying, it is a curious thing how this kind of reprisal repeats itself in history. On June 16, 1900, a Proclamation was issued in Africa by Lord Roberts. On reflection, I cannot but think that the great general was from the beginning most uneasy on the subject of it. It acerbated African feeling, prolonging, as I think, the war, and doing much to retard the settlement. But there were forces behind Lord Roberts which

were extremely difficult to control, and it may have been that among his advisers at the Front there was a reflection of some part of that extraordinary bitterness and passion which was manifest in Government circles at home. When that kind of feeling is poured into the mind of a nation there is no saying to what courses those in authority may be led.

I need not refer to that part of the Proclamation which authorized the selection from each district of Boers to be put upon trains passing through. This was in reprisal for damage having been done to trains. It was in imitation of a German transaction of 1870 which had been universally and justly reprobated, and which, according to international authority which I cited, was treated in the German case as an illegal brutality. This view must have reached headquarters long before I spoke, and it redounds to the credit of Lord Roberts that five weeks after the date of the Proclamation that part of it was withdrawn.

The other part of the Proclamation was, however, much more serious. It ordered a thing which I said, and I still believe it, may have moved to revulsion the heart of civilized mankind, viz., the devastation of the country, the burning of houses and farms and the dealing with the residents therein under martial law, "in the vicinity where damage is done." Of course, everybody understands that, by the Laws of Nations and of war, it is not permitted to destroy property unless it is used directly or indirectly for belligerent purposes, nor is it permitted to molest, plunder, imprison or injure any citizens of a hostile Power who are non-combatants—this rule being the nearest approximation which the rough laws of war can make to the elementary justice of not punishing the innocent for the guilty.

Lord Roberts, still uneasy, wrote to General Botha in September an unhappy dispatch which made things worse. He confessed that the measures were repugnant to him, but declared that he was obliged to resort to them "by the evidently firm resolve on the part of yourself and the burghers to continue the war." In other words, because you continue to fight, we shall do things repugnant not only to law but to our better nature.

Then in November a curious thing happened. Lord Morley, on the 16th, wrote a letter to the *Times*, which I quoted as "eloquent, touching and powerful," and two days afterwards the notable Proclamation of June was declared by Lord Roberts in a subsequent Proclamation to have been misunderstood. Its meaning was declared to have been confined, so far as the burning of farms was concerned, to acts of treachery, or, in short, to those belligerent operations which International Law takes stock of. Nothing more unfortunate in the issue of a military document, and nothing more highly creditable in military history than its recall, do I remember. But for that recall, we could not have looked the Germans in the face to declare ourselves shocked at their conduct in Belgium and France. And the very principles on which the Liberals then relied in the debate to which I am referring were the principles which to its honour Britain founded upon and followed in its repudiation of these German doings.

Alas! in the African case it was difficult to recall the awful effects of what had been done. A few days after the debate in the House of Commons to which I am referring, a White Paper of the most appalling character was issued, showing that 634 farms had been burned, and that in many cases the sole reason assigned was that the

owner was "on commando"—that is to say, was fighting for his country—and in many more the still more awful reason was assigned—"husband on commando." Families turned out on the veldt, property and furniture burned to the ground.

How difficult the task of subsequent statesmanship! To eradicate an imprint so poignant and so deep upon the memory of men and women and children! Impossible? Nothing in true statesmanship is impossible.

It was to that colossal task that Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman devoted a large part of his later years, and in it he was aided by the vast forgiveness of Generals Botha and Smuts: Botha, whose wife wandered for months hiding in the veldt, driven from her home; and Smuts, whose wife was herded to a Concentration Camp, where her first and infant child shortly died! Is it not to the glory of the Dutch and Anglo-Saxon races that at a supreme moment their leading statesmen rose to the call of that oblivion of a dark past which makes possible a glorious future of co-operation and unity and human kindness? The obscurantists who would undo that settlement are the enemies of mankind.

It is easy now for us to recall such incidents of Parliamentary discussion; but it is less easy than it was to understand what point statesmanship in England had reached which did not understand the call of law and of humanity which was then made. Our protestations in a Parliament constituted as was that of 1900 were all in vain. Lord Roberts in the field was a wiser man. He saw without doubt the awful dilemma in which British policy had placed him when it declared the annexation of the Republics—an annexation on paper not made effective by

actual occupation, and therefore entirely contrary to law. Such an annexation placed the population, however well-doing they might be, however anxious for a quiet life under any Government whatsoever, however innocent of crime, in the awful dilemma of being either the rebels to one Power or the traitors to another.

What were such people to do? Above them there was placed, as the lawyers say, a Government *de jure;* around them they had the Government of their own race and country—a Government *de facto.* The position of Germany in Belgium was more legitimate than this, for Germany had overrun Belgium in fact.

A strange analogy occurs to the mind from the times in which we live. Always there is the same difficulty where rule is ineffective, where there is what I have said, the one Government above and the other Government around. Then, indeed, whether it be Dutchmen or Belgians or Irishmen, with each and all of them it is the same lament of Rosse:

> "Cruel are the times when we are traitors
> And do not know ourselves: when we hold rumour
> From what we fear, yet know not what we fear,
> But float upon a wild and violent sea
> Each way and move."

* * * * *

How is it, my dear child, that I have got into this long political talk? Perhaps it is that in the intimacies of life which I have made I have seen how this stern South African battle tried the character and hearts of men. Statesmen at home, statesmen in Africa, they needed courage and wonderful wisdom. Would that I could have helped them more!

In those days I took refuge in literature and in history. In literature the happiest of misfortunes had overtaken me. The old fat Shakespeare—you remember it—the Johnson Shakespeare without the back, got lost. Alexander presented me with another, the three-volumed edition of Macmillan. So I kept in that high company over again, re-marking the whole plays and sonnets once more, and finding and noting fresh glories, thus lighting up with delight what otherwise would have been the saddened intervals of strenuous days. But more than that: late in life—alas! how late!—I let myself loose on Spenser, spreading myself among his spacious times and finding him a veritable revelation. I even dragged him on to platforms, reciting in the midst of the keen conflict on the big issue of the day such lines as these:

"Is this the joy of armes? Be these the parts
Of glorious knighthood after blood to thrust
And not regard due rights and just desarts?
Vaine is the vaunt, and victory unjust
That more to mighty hands than rightful cause doth trust."

* * * * *

And in those days, too, I took my other refuge in history, studying deeply the annals of Canada. I put together an article on what I called "The Durham Road to Peace," which Knowles, clever editor, deeply cut and carved upon, but published in the *Nineteenth Century*. It pointed out how when a fusion of races, or at least a working constitutional unity, was wished for, it could not be secured by the iron heel, but alone by the olive branch.

The famous Report of Lord Durham, about the year 1840, laid down the lines of forgiveness and amnesty so determinedly that the so-called Loyalists—that is to say,

the short-sighted fire-eaters—rioted in the streets of Montreal and burned the Governor-General's residence about his ears. The fire-eaters and fire-raisers were quelled, and then the policy of amnesty triumphed. It was for such a settlement as that, by the way, that I spoke in express terms in the speech in the Commons to which I have referred.

Canada; Africa: Forgiveness, amnesty, the wisdom of oblivion of evil, the call of a human brotherhood wider and deeper and better than antagonisms of race: will history teach men nothing of the value of these noble things; and how they last; and how they heal? People and Governors of Ireland, bethink yourselves; consider!

On these things my interventions were founded, and perhaps they helped Sir Henry a little, for on them we were absolutely agreed. Anyhow, closer and closer I got into the intimacy of his friendship, and as I did so I found that he was gifted with the rarest qualities of vision and with a fearlessness that was quite indomitable. How steadying it was to have him as a counsellor and friend! Was not your father a very lucky man?

Here is a little bundle of letters which I have come upon. I cannot open it to-night: it is late, and I must go to rest. How often you have heard me say, until it has become one of our family maxims, that the greatest of British institutions is the waste-paper basket. Well, by some kind of good luck these letters never reached that receptacle. Perhaps in a day or two I will disclose some things from the little bundle.

Good night.

Your loving

FATHER.

LETTER XXXIV

TEMPTATIONS IN THE WILDERNESS

Craigmyle.

September 25, 1920.

DEAREST,

In this quiet, how the poets come back to you: how you find them helping you out by giving form and expression to the moods of nature and one's thoughts about them! The tempestuous passing of another equinox, and then the succession of these sweet and placid and reflective days.

For the former came Tennyson's strong lines (how often is real strength concealed by the perfection of his measure):—

> " Risest thou, this dim dawn again,
> And howlest, issuing out of night,
> With blasts that blow the poplar white
> And lash with storm the streaming pane? "

And then the welcome drought with the tang in its reminder that the year is in the fall. And out there the glorious harvest: how can you express the response of the soul to the sense of plenty, and ingathering, and the passage of time? You do it in the words of Shakespeare's immortal sonnet:—

> " When lofty trees I see, barren of leaves,
> Which erst from heat did canopy the herd,
> And summer's green all girded up in sheaves,
> Borne on the bier with white and bristly beard."

Then comes the inevitable reflection about beauty and the wastes of time. But why should we, with our faith, turn transiency into an obsession? Why should we?—but then I seemed to see you standing right in the middle of that barley field, a good deal more attractive than Ruth, and you were telling me—a very unattractive Boaz—that you had not come so far for musings but for gleanings. Gleanings you were after—gleanings: where were the gleanings? My dear, I am rebuked. Now then for gleanings.

* * * * *

I was speaking, in a letter some time ago, of the Temptations in the Wilderness. The Liberals were out for the ten years from 1895 till 1905. Of all the Temptations, Liberal Imperialism was the chief—well supported in men and funds, well organized, well advertised; and plain ordinary Liberalism felt that to yield to it would be to lose its soul. This may have been right or wrong, but that was how people felt. It was how I felt myself. All through the Education battles and into the South African War, this Temptation was the drag that was on the party led by Sir William Harcourt in the Commons.

But that war, of which I have told you an incident or two—that war might and did appear to many as at least some justification for a separate organization of Liberals who sided with the militarist position. Yet, as you may imagine, it was a pretty heavy addition to the labours of those who had to lead the party as a sound Opposition.

Well then, what happened next? Surely, when the war was over, this kind of thing could come to an end! Not a bit of it. A new Temptation in the Wilderness

appeared. But this time it was more of a theatrical affair. The dramatic company the same. Lord Rosebery, alas! had left the leadership of the party. Sir William Harcourt, alas! had resigned, and none of the able trio, Asquith, Grey and Haldane, had been selected to succeed him. The choice fell on Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman.

Mutterings could not be stilled: the same powerful, dissatisfied men were at work, and another hyphenation saw the light. Enter the Liberal League. Of course these men, able, versed in affairs, in the prime of their powers, were entirely within their rights in pushing their versions of national duty to the front and in claiming that reason lay with them. But when they dubbed theirs the true Liberalism and put the name on their signboard, they ran the risk of disintegrating all the progressive forces in the country. And some of us, who had seen in the Commons and its Lobbies what a weight and harassment disunion was to leadership, felt that all this was really too bad to the old cause and to Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman.

It was in these circumstances that in September of the year 1902 I received an invitation, worded curiously enough, to accompany Lord Rosebery to the platform when he addressed a great meeting in the Empire Theatre under the auspices of the Edinburgh and East of Scotland Liberal League. The country was being elaborately mapped out: the ex-Premier was himself President of the organization, and most naturally there were the highest expectations in regard to the new and determined political departure.

I replied to the invitation by the following letter:

"17, *Abercromby Place,*
"*Edinburgh.*
"*September* 25, 1902.

"DEAR MR. CLAY,

"I am in receipt of your circular, in which you intimate that Lord Rosebery will deliver a political address in Edinburgh on October 25, under the auspices and in furtherance of the principles of the Liberal League, and stating that, if I am in general sympathy with the objects of the meeting, and desire to attend, you would be pleased to forward to me a platform ticket. I should gladly have put the circular aside without remark were it not that you request an answer, and I accordingly write to you to thank you for the invitation and to decline it.

"How do the facts stand? Lord Rosebery was asked by the Scottish Liberal Association to address a meeting in Edinburgh this autumn, and he declined; he was asked by the United Liberal Council, representing the four constituencies of the City, to address a meeting this autumn, and he again declined; and now he comes forward to address a meeting in the same place, and at the same time, under the auspices and in furtherance of the principles of the Liberal League. Can there be any meaning in this but one?

"That one whom we admire and esteem, one through whose continued co-operation with the party he once brilliantly led so much good can be done and evil avoided for our people, and one to whom we look for loyal and powerful work in the future, that he should thus reject the whole and choose a section is indeed strange, and, had it not happened, would have been declared incredible. This is especially regrettable at a time when the country is justly hostile to the present Government and is earnestly looking for that unity and cohesion in the Opposition by which alone can be secured an effective change in the direction of public affairs. From this point of view your meeting is not merely a party misfortune; it is a national loss. As a Liberal, anxiously desiring the health and growth of Liberalism, I cannot accordingly say that I am in general sympathy with the objects of the meeting.

"As to furthering the principles of the Liberal League, let us be frank about it. Take 'efficiency.' Who is not for

efficiency? Why should one side of politics imitate the other side in the presumption of capturing vague and sounding generalities for party use? I should as little admit that efficiency had a sectional significance among Liberals, as agree that 'Empire' and 'Constitution' were the special care of the Tory party. Take 'education.' Who is not in favour of education? But come down to particulars: and while 99 per cent. of Liberals are against the present English Education Bill, the 1 per cent. who stamp it with a certain approval are good and able friends of my own who devoutly believe in the furthering of the principles of the Liberal League. The list already grows bare, but I need not refer to such principles further.

"Faithfully yours,

"THO. SHAW."

This was plain speaking. Others, infinitely more important than I—notably Mr. Morley—had been working in the same direction, deprecating disunion, pleading fearlessly for the old faith, and so on; and the Liberal League's real position and possible future for good or for mischief soon became a subject of wide discussion all over the Kingdom.

Fortunately the chief adventurers in the enterprise were saved for the service of the country. The dexterity and forbearance, the determination and goodwill, of the lovable "C.B." shone in a transaction of which I will try to give you an inside view by and by.

Unfortunately, the gifted Earl—high office saw him no more. More and more he withdrew from the range of public affairs. This has been a source of infinite regret: and the occasions have surely not been infrequent during the great European War when his word for good would have been a word of power.

You must not think that he who knew the game so

well ever treated myself as one who had not played it. On the contrary, I spoke for his son in Midlothian, and that with pleasure and great goodwill. Little did I dream then that within a few years my own son would be standing for the same county. And little did I dream that, like Lord Rosebery, I should watch that contest, without personal participation, but with that aloofness, real or feigned, which becomes a member of the House of Lords.

Certain incidents stick in the mind. One evening during the earlier contest I dined at Dalmeny; we got into some kind of historical strain, give and take, and I have seldom heard even that host so illuminating and so attractively vivid. Emerging from the dining-room, still in talk, we were confronted by a bust of Mirabeau, just opposite. I stopped before it: it was true to nature and showed an appallingly ugly man. I said:

"Lord Rosebery, did you ever hear what the father of Mirabeau said to the uncle of Mirabeau?"

"What was that?" said he; "I don't think I know that."

"Oh," said I; "the youngster was attacked by smallpox or some trouble of that kind; and there was a nurse who besmeared his face with an ointment which horribly disfigured it for life. The father conveyed the news to the uncle in a brief compendious letter, which said: 'Your nephew is as ugly as the nephew of the devil.'"

It won a smile from the cultured Earl.

* * * * *

As to the Liberal League, it had a few big explosions; then there was a flicker here and there. Then silence.

I heard quite enough about that blessed letter—written,

by the by, this very day eighteen years ago. Its only point was, as it happened, that it expressed the protest of tens of thousands of plain, sturdy people who wanted peace and progress and an end to turmoil. Well, somebody has to do these things. Said Morley to me: "I call you Thomas Bell-the-Cat."

Sir Henry was hearty enough.

"I was at Wiesbaden; and one day Tom Sutherland, in the reading-room of the hotel, handed me across the *Times*, pointing with his finger and saying, 'Have you read that?'

"'What did you think?' said I, wanting to get at his mind.

"'Think!' said he. 'I was like the auld wife in the sang. I gied three skips ower the floor, O!'"

I am off through the fields.

Your ever affectionate

FATHER.

LETTER XXXV

SIR HENRY CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN

9, *Bolton Gardens, S.W.*5.

October 25, 1920.

MY DEAREST GIRL,

To be back again and into judicial harness will, of course, be rather a hindrance to my doing my duty as a letter-writer to your dear self.

The air is full of rumours. An actual strike of all the coal-miners in the country has already lasted over a week: and a strike is threatened of all the railway workers in the country—threatened from a desire to exhibit sympathy or to show solidarity in labour, or, among the younger bloods, to have a fling of leisure and liberty as well as the colliers. And many anxieties there are for public men, with too little consideration of these by a nervous and irascible public.

This is what one is in the midst of here. To lift one's head after a day of severe judicial labour is but to find oneself deafened with the clamorous difficulties of public issues. While you! you are still lingering amidst the country quiet of these sweet October days.

Often at such times I think upon my old and trusted confidential adviser. To him it was that I could with utter frankness tell how I interpreted the currents of public affairs, for what storms I thought I could foresee that we should be prepared, and what rocks and shoals the political

mariner should avoid. I knew that everything was safe in his keeping, that he would check me with wisdom, encourage me with kindness, and turn things so deliciously topsy-turvy that sunshine broke over all the landscape.

You know, of course, that I am speaking of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman. Of all the rewards of days and nights through years on end of political labour, this, I think, was the greatest, that he was my friend.

The first occasion, if I remember aright, on which, so to speak, we took the floor together was at Stirling. He had been hearing of how I was getting on in the Border Burghs, and he had me along to eke out a constituency meeting. You could see how he got on with his constituents. He never was a fluent speaker; but his hesitations were studied, and these, along with the burr of his accent and the weightiness of what he said, riveted the attention of these Scotchmen upon him. Everyone had a general feeling that here is the talk of a man who knows, to men who trust him.

Thus it was that political confidence in him wavered little; and what he was to these Stirling Burghs on the small scale, he was also on the wider range to the Liberal Party which he afterwards led. To trust, however, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman was to give yourself to him; and, doing so, he welcomed you into the circle of his confidence.

But if ever Liberal or constituent or citizen in private or in public showed signs, I will not say of double dealing, but of being too clever and not completely on the square, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman—more quickly than

any man I ever knew—discerned that thing, and saw in it the negation of true friendship and the death of confidence.

I think that that is how I would put my testimony of him. Hesitations, timidities, searchings of heart—these he could see with a great kindliness when they were symptoms of searching for truth; but sharpnesses, clevernesses, subtleties, finesse—these also he could unerringly see; but he looked upon these things as dangerous to truth. That was how people who loved him loved him so much, and people who affected to despise him showed that in their hearts they realized that Sir Henry had found them out. I have persons—public men—in my eye, when I speak thus.

The next big bump of contact was, I think, in Alloa, where the good J. B. Balfour had got Sir Henry and myself to some kind of big demonstration. It was at that meeting perhaps that I spoke of him as reminding me of the Spanish proverb, "'Virtue in the middle,' as the Devil said when he sat between two lawyers!" Anyhow, we had a rollicking evening, and where do you think we spent the night? Why, at Mr. Forrester Paton's beautiful home. Little did I think then that that fine fellow the eldest son was to run away with one of my own daughters.

Sir Henry enjoyed Inglewood. For one thing—and that was noticeable both in London and at Belmont—he always loved comfort, warmth, good pictures, and, with these and good fellowship around him, his geniality had an easy flow.

It was this simplicity of character, directness of vision, and extraordinary toleration even in listening to weaker

and more showy men, that concealed from them and from the public both his scholarship and his strength. He saw affectation through and through, but he viewed it without vindictiveness and with a kind of amused sense that a man who could show off in that fashion was really a better man than all that, if he would only give himself a chance. For the rest, including men's weaknesses and their varieties of view, the warmth of his heart gave them a place in his scheme of things; and in the later years of his life, when great responsibilities rested upon him and the load of domestic sorrow was hard to bear, the stability, as I happen to know, of his faith in things unseen upheld him in a kind of brave dignity that made one bow the head in sheer and reverent respect.

More than once I have heard men in his presence venture, for instance, upon literary topics, and find, from a question put to them in almost a casual manner—find with an almost dazed surprise—that they were talking to an expert.

He had what I might call a retentive vision for the characters of living men, and his judgment was often not one that would have been shared by public opinion at large. For instance, I have heard him place Gallifet as in the first rank, in his opinion, of talented, efficient Frenchmen.

I hardly like, even to you, to tell you how severe he was when he met with anything that did not savour of straight dealing, but I shall never forget how, looking across at the Government front bench, he went on judging men by honesty. That was always his touchstone, and he said to me:

"Look, Thomas, at that man over there. He should

lead the Tory party. He is of the old school, but the true Tory school. He is a capital Parliamentarian and he is an honest, straight man. I like Walter Long."

In his house you could almost make a sure find in the latest and best of the only two literatures, French and English, which I was able to take stock of. But he himself was what I may call a capacious reader. Nothing came amiss to him, apparently, even in Italian and German as well as French; and this habit of getting to the heart of books very pleasantly filled up his life.

I have to confess to you, Isabel, that he was a little impatient of some of the modern Scotch literature—impatient, that is, in one particular. He seemed to think that those writers who developed their representations of Scotch character attempted too much to make a dramatic essay of whatever in it would appear odd and grotesque or even uncouth, and that for the paltry purpose of tickling or of truckling to the Southron. He looked upon this as a kind of unfaithfulness to truth, and in this I most heartily agreed with him, down to the last word; he could little indeed abide Scotchmen who sold their own characteristics in a market of curios for the English or American buyer. No one knew better than he that the real Scotland was not there, but was in a world where the realities were sterner and the sympathies were tenderer and the drolleries were pure and crystal clear.

I shall not name names, but I could well have imagined him on the verge of wrath at any Play with squalid representations of Scotch festivities and habits and with family worship conducted on the stage amid the giggles of the

vulgar. Was there ever any such Play? I am afraid there was. And when I saw it I felt glad that one great Scotchman had passed from the scene.

These private affairs were all of a piece, mark you, with the solid principles of his public life. I call him "Mr. Honesty." Sometimes, when he was breasting a passionate and contemptuous opposition, I called him "Mr. Greatheart." People wondered at his influence; but character always tells; and the adhesion of many to him, when there occurred those "Temptations in the Wilderness" of which I have spoken to you in previous letters, arose from these two things—first, that people liked his downrightness and courage; and, secondly, for and because they loved him so.

Once at Belmont your mother and I were his guests, the only other guest being the Archbishop of Canterbury. I watched those two Scotchmen with much interest. I broke suddenly in upon them deep in a conclave in the library, but I quickly made myself scarce. I thought at the time that it would be difficult to match such a pair. Both of them sturdy, scholarly, serious, Christian, Scotchmen, with shrewdness and goodness and strength, and all in a capital physical frame. As I observed them I could almost fancy that the one was quite deliberately taking the measure of the other and that the other was quite deliberately aware of it. That the Prime Minister thought that the Archbishop was his match in shrewdness rather appeared from this: I cast a fly over him after the Primate left, as to his view about the departing guest; but very properly he gave me no satisfaction—except this, by the way, that he said to me:

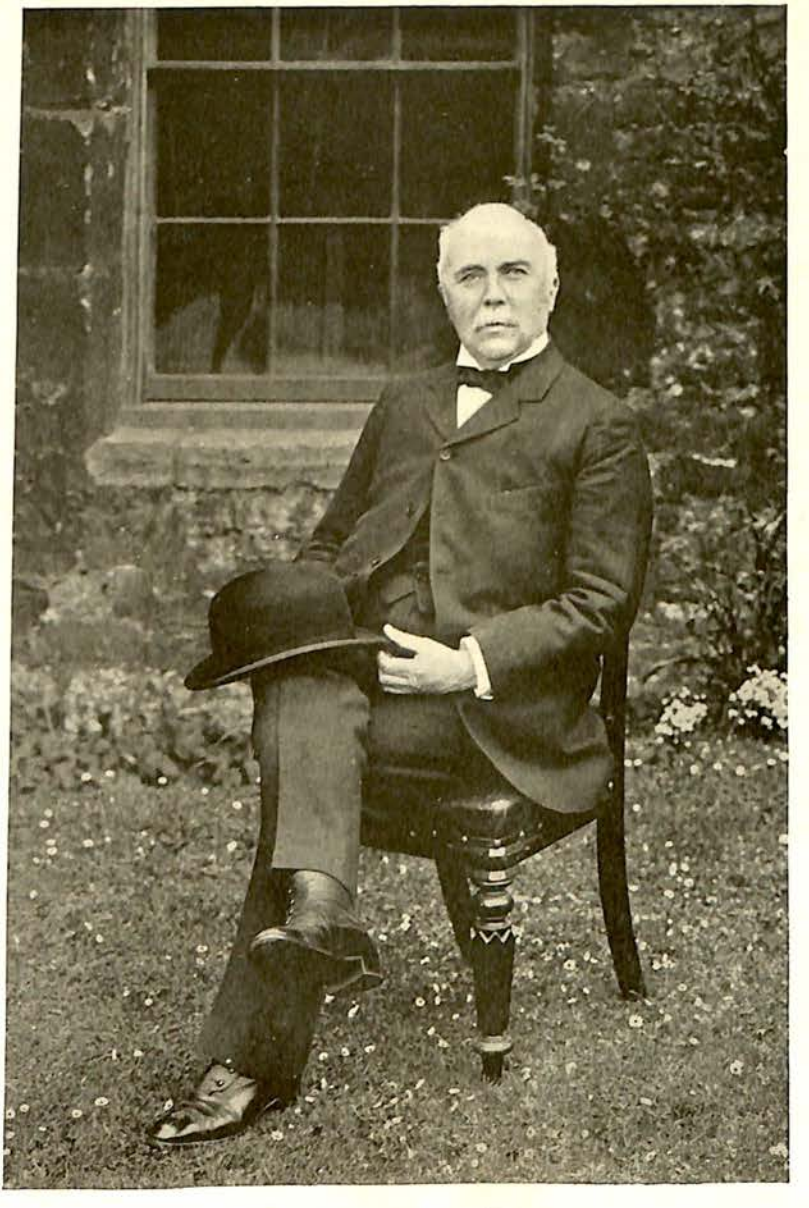
"The old grey horse."

I said, "What do you mean by that?" And then he told me a story about real sagacity, the story of a bishop who visited his diocese for the first time and was introduced to his clergy, displaying extraordinary knowledge of their separate peculiarities and habits. To the infinite delight of one, he said: "And how is the old grey horse?" After the reception was over, he was asked about this, and explained that he had seen a few grey hairs on the coat of the worthy clergyman and felt pretty sure that he had ridden across on the animal described. That was all the light that I got from the Premier about the Primate!

He nursed a curious idea as he went about on his lawn, namely, that the trees and he used to speak to each other; and he encouraged this whimsical notion until you almost thought he was serious. In the evenings he joined in all the games going, and I remember well one scene round a billiard-table where he and some very distinguished statesmen were gathered by your daring sister Elsie, and he roystered with the rest in the heartiest merriment.

Of a Sunday he would tell me to be decent and go down to the Established Kirk and sit in his seat "in the briest o' the laft."

Underneath all this exterior gaiety I think that the dangers and disloyalties to the good Liberalism which he sincerely loved were gall and wormwood to his heart and mind. He was a true inheritor of the Gladstone tradition, with that noble admixture of the Bright and Cobden doctrine that the principles of character in a good, straight man were those that should be the principles of character in a good, straight nation. Here, for instance, is a letter which I think I ought to write out for you in full. He was



SIR HENRY CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN.

coming to stay with us in Edinburgh for some Convention in that metropolis, and this is what he wrote to me:

"*Belmont Castle,*
"*Meigle.*
"*January* 17, 1901.

"MY DEAR SHAW,

"Your hospitable purposes are all too generous. I shall be delighted to come early as you suggest on the 29th.

"The cloud over South Africa looks, to my view, blacker than ever. This time last year the dangers were military, and we believed that sooner or later we should overcome them. Now, they are partly military and partly political, and what is good for the one is bad for the other. It is not by force of arms that South Africa will be lost, but by misgovernment; and instead of blustering about reinforcements and Army reform, or, shall we say, platitudinizing about commercial education, it would be well if our eminent ones applied themselves to this problem—How to make those love us who now hate us.

"A fine New Year's sentiment, if ever there was one!

"Yours,
"H. C.-B."

Many a time in the years since then I have thought of that sentence—"How to make those love us who now hate us." It is the pure gold of statesmanship.

Your loving
FATHER.

17. Jany. 01.

BELMONT CASTLE,
MEIGLE

My dear Shaw,

Your hospitable purposes are all too generous. I shall be delighted to come Early as you suggest on the 29th.

The cloud over S.A. looks, to my view, blacker than ever. This time last year the dangers were military, & we believed that sooner or later we could overcome them. Now, they are partly military

& hardly political, & what is good for the one is bad for the other. It is not by force of arms that S.A. will be lost, but by misgovernment: and instead of blustering about reinforcements & Army reform, or, shall we say, platitudinising about Commercial Education, it would be well if our eminent ones applied themselves to the problem, How to make those love us who now hate us.

A fine New Years Sentiment, if ever there was one!

H.G.B.

LETTER XXXVI

SNOWED UNDER

House of Lords.

November 13, 1926.

My Dearest,

I find that this morning I had put the little bundle of letters that I spoke of in my pocket, and, although we have had a long day hearing very learned men speak, and following their subtleties, so beautifully wound together, I should like to ease my mind before I leave the precincts of the Palace. I wish to let you see what was the style of our dear friend, whom we came to love so well for his warm-hearted interest in every one of us. And I should like also to show you how he looked at life, without any round-about argufying in his mind, but with a plain, clear vision of great, straight truths.

You must know, by the way, that in the year 1900—of course you will remember it—there was a famous General Election. It was called the "Khaki" Election. It was astutely managed; the time for it was adroitly chosen, on the ground that the war was substantially over, that it was only, as one eminent person said, "a sort of a war" that remained. That made a good cry for continuing the Government in office in order, don't you see? to complete the policy to which the war had led up.

If not that, why then this, that even though the war was still going on, would it not be an outrage on all political

propriety to have horses swopped in the middle of the stream? So, mark you, the Government won on this version of it too, because they ought at least to be allowed to complete the war itself.

A great science, electioneering! And Liberalism, poor thing! was snowed under. Worse than that: here was a great party in the State, even if not snowed under, likely to all appearance to fall to pieces by internal disruption. Smaller and smaller grew the ranks (within Parliament, that is to say) of those who were root and branch in favour of its ancient creed. As for Militarism, the Tory party was completely at its mercy; and the result of the 1900 election justified its highest hopes.

What was to be done? Why, my dear, just this—to stick to one's principles, to refuse all truckling and all compromise, and to go on fighting to the last man. In all my conversations with Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, I never heard any other note than that; and there never came from his lips any suggestion of compromising or bartering on such major topics of the hour as Ireland, or Africa, or Protection in any shape or form.

Now for the bundle. I had been fighting—we all had been fighting—for our lives; and my majority of 500 went down to 200. Shortly thereafter I received the following letter:

"*Belmont Castle,*
"*Meigle.*
"*October* 17, 1900.

"MY DEAR SHAW,

"We mariners who have survived the storm, now that we have dried our clothes and swallowed a dram, may begin to rub the salt out of our eyes and look about us.

"What think ye of Caledonia? 'Stands Scotland where

she did?' as Shakespeare and Charles Parker have asked. Is it not deplorable? In my Burghs my falling-off is mainly due to the Irish turning against me on the Education question: not unnaturally, for I should be sorry to agree with them. But it makes a big difference if we do not get votes from the Protestant and anti-sectarian side to balance them.

"The same thing happened, I am told, elsewhere: e.g., Bridgeton and Dumbartonshire.

"But there was a lot of Khaki in it, too: and we made a mistake in holding our tongues last winter when men were taking up their line on the war.

"Now, is it Imperialism or the other thing that has counted for safety?

* * * * *

"I do not see anything very clear from the pure electioneering point of view.

* * * * *

"Yours always,

"H. C.-B."

This dazed condition did not last long. As he emerged from it he wrote to me that letter of the 17th January, 1900, which I call the "golden letter" and which I sent to you a short time ago. It showed that his vision had resumed its normal clarity.

Yes, indeed, this was the man for me to follow. He was by this time, however, I sometimes thought, beginning to show signs of extreme strain. He was not robust: still less so was his wife; and his tender care for her shone in all his arrangements and at many turns of his conversation. He shirked meetings: here is a letter, for instance, in which he implored me to go and speak for him at Dunfermline; and you will see the beginning of illness from which I do not think he ever recovered.

"6, *Grosvenor Place, S.W.*

March 23, 1901.

"MY DEAR SHAW,

"Scripture, like Homer, sometimes nods; and it makes a mistake on that point of prophets having no honour in their own country. There are exceptions, and you are one. Read the enclosed" (a letter from his chairman) "which I thoroughly endorse. I am sure the Dunfermline people would rise like one man to receive you—but there would be more than one man there. And, politically, the embers are sound and living, but they would be all the better of being blown upon, if you could undertake to act as bellows.

"Unfortunately, I am forbidden to-day by my doctor to undertake my meeting and speech on the 27th. I have been rather 'run down' for some time and have been more or less laid up with a cold which does not give way. He allows me to attend (with due precautions and limitations) to Parliamentary work, but he now positively forbids the journey and the big meeting. I do not know what can be done. Sinclair, poor man, has to patch something up. I am exceedingly sorry to cause disappointment.

"This is a very critical time, too, and my proper place is in the House of Commons. Still, I would have run down one day and returned the next if I could have safely done it.

"Yours,

"H. C.-B."

He stayed with us on several occasions in Edinburgh in the subsequent years, and there are charming letters in the bundle showing the interest he took in all of you.

* * * * *

In a little while the Liberal Party, small, but banding itself together under his leadership, began to make its mark in public discussions, and some of these letters will make, I suppose, good stuff for his biographer. We shall see. I had, for instance, been writing to him in the beginning

of 1903, suggesting certain amendments to the Address at the Opening of Parliament. Here is a bit of what he wrote in reply:

"*Lord Warden Hotel,*
"*Dover.*
"*January* 6, 1903.

"My dear Shaw,

"I was delighted to receive your letter and your suggestions as to action in the House.

"I was in London yesterday for a meeting we had summoned of the supreme wisdom; and all its elements seem well charged with energy, and their respective winds apparently blowing the same way.

"The situation is delicate, for which we must refuse all compromise, disregard results, challenge divisions, smite and spare not—we cannot despise the help of the timorous and forlorn free fooder, and they are of the race of coney and easily scared.

"There are fifty-three of them of all sorts, but we are advised that of these only five can be reckoned on to vote even on free food against the superlative Government: these are indeed valuable allies.

"I was glad to find that our friends, though anxious to make things easy for them, have not a notion of yielding anything or of spoiling any chance for their sake.

* * * * *

"My wife is getting along, but it is a slow business.

"Kindest remembrances to Mrs. Shaw.

"Yours,
"H. C.-B."

Things undoubtedly were moving. You can see it in the tone of his letters. Here is a long eight-page one, for instance, which deals in his firm, illuminating way with a wide variety of political topics. As I have been troubling you with the African thing, that is the only one of these topics which I will show you his mind upon. Anyhow, this is how it goes:

"*Belmont Castle,*
"*Meigle.*
"*September* 10, 1903.

"MY DEAR SHAW,

"A scratch of your pen is grateful.

"I think the Dunfermline people have not made a bad fixture for the opening of their Club: November 2, afternoon diet, me in the chair as President (an' wha daur say nay?), and you making an oration. Admirable! Do not for any sake cry off.

* * * * *

"We have a lively winter before us."

Then comes his catalogue of public issues, and he proceeds:

"(c) Our old friend South Africa. Do you notice that little Harry Johnston (ex-East Africa and Uganda), an Empire-builder of the first water, Imperialist sans reproche, has been saying at Rochester that it was Joe's bungling that caused the South African War?

"The remarkable thing is, not that he should think so, but that he should think it conducive (or at least not hurtful) to his success to proclaim it. He need never have said a word about it. This shows his estimate at least of present public feeling.

"How every word you and I have said is confirmed as true! Are we ever to be allowed to say so?

"(d) Elgin's Report. Now here is a trap opened for us.

"I see in the papers that the Liberal Leaguers are going to dance a fandango over it, and trot out the old fire-escapes, efficiency, lack of foresight, etc., etc. . . . We shall, of course, denounce stupidity, recklessness, carelessness, wherever we see it, and there is a lot of it exposed. But we do not want to militarize our people or our policy, and that is what these people aim at. Don't have wars; have them only on a scale within your means; above all, don't teach our people to think that military drill and military power are the chief end of man. Don't give the cat the cream to keep; don't let the Army dictate to us. Keep its government in the old constitutional

civilian hands, which the Duke of Wellington himself thought essential.

"In this war the crime was in the war itself, in the proceedings that brought it on, in the tone of our policy. The question of men enough, of guns enough, or good or bad generals—these are subordinate questions, which are to be exaggerated with a view to putting upon us huge military establishments, preposterous preparations, and the subordination of everything to military needs when we ought to be freer from that curse than any nation in Europe.

"(How is that for a letting-off of steam?)

"Enfin, a nice kettle of fish all round.

* * * * *

"Yours,

"H. C.-B."

His verdicts upon his colleagues were shrewd and kindly always. Hear this, for instance, of Sir William Harcourt, which he wrote to me from Vienna:

"*Hotel Kranz,*
"*Wien,* I.,
"*Neuer Markt* 5.
"*October* 2, 1904.

"My dear Shaw,

"Your letter has come circuitously to hand, and it breathes the kindness of Mrs. Shaw and her man.

* * * * *

"Late last night I heard that poor old W. V. H. was gone, and we are much grieved. He was a good friend to our friends and to the right cause; and I am glad he has made an exit, when he had to go, so stately and well ordered. We shall miss him sorely, for he was a terror to (domestic) evil-doers, though sometimes a thorn in the flesh to those who do well.

* * * * *

"With our kindest regards,

"Yours always,

"H. C.-B."

I feel almost tempted to go out of my dates to quote to you one hearty commendation which he wrote to me about Mr. Ure, the Solicitor-General for Scotland, whose invaluable help and services I shall never forget. Ure was unworthily treated in later days by Mr. Arthur Balfour, but he defended himself in the House of Commons in a speech so convincing and masterly as to demand very much more in the nature of apology than he ever received. Sir Henry had a truer knowledge of human nature, and Ure will forgive me, I am sure, if I quote these sentences from an amusing letter talking about our Abercromby Place family, which he wound up thus:

"*Belmont Castle,*

"*Meigle, Scotland.*

"My dear Shaw, "*January* 9, 1907.

* * * * *

"As to Ure, he is what in my antediluvian youth we used to call 'a brick'—a good, square, adaptable, reliable, waterproof and ornamental man.

"Remember me to all your next generation, and, if you have anything over, throw in the head of the house.

"Always yours,

"H. C.-B."

I think that I must reserve, however, these letters until I tell you of an interview I had with Sir Henry after the General Election of 1905, when Liberalism regained its power and when he was swept by acclamation into the position of Prime Minister.

Meantime, I am off. We shall meet at the "Old Vic" and hear the laughter of simple people and note how they know already almost by heart the turns and finer passages of *As You Like It.* Your loving

Father.

LETTER XXXVII

THE STRANGE WILL

9, *Bolton Gardens, S.W.*5.

June 29, 1890.

My own Isabel,

I know quite well what you are thinking. You are thinking that all these accounts and stories of doings in Church and State are right enough, but, "Father, am I never to hear anything about the law, and cases, and the Parliament House of Edinburgh?"

Well, you see, the law was my living: these other things, the movements of public affairs, they were my life. Yet the law was no morose or jealous mistress, and was far, far better to me than such a wayward lover deserved. But to fit in these two ends of existence, the life and the living, when between them there ran a railway track of 400 miles, needed some engineering and not a little loss of sleep. As I once told you, I think, in the Session before I became Lord Advocate I travelled on that track, mostly by night, a distance equal to the circumference of the Earth.

Let me compromise. You heard from me one or two incidents of the earlier legal years: then comes that long, steady pull of which the memory retains so little: but now will you be satisfied if I give you, say, a couple of stories from my closing years at the Bar?

Life at the Bar and life in the Commons have between them this curious contrast. At the Bar you pass from

gravity and anxiety into familiarity, and thence to a sense of buoyancy, exhilaration, and even gaiety. Whereas in the Commons you pass from buoyancy, exhilaration, and even gaiety, into familiarity and then to anxiety and gravity. What a roundabout way this is of saying that in the one you pass "from grave to gay," and in the other "from lively to severe."

Having thus warned you not to expect too serious matter, I proceed with my cases.

One was what was known as the Thoms case. Thoms, a man of considerable means, had been for many years Sheriff of the Orkneys and Shetland, and he died after a life of not a little eccentricity, leaving a rather peculiar will. This will was hotly contested by his relatives, and I had to maintain against them that the quondam sheriff was of sound disposing mind.

Some of the most peculiar things he did were, in point of fact, not brought out in evidence, as, for instance, that, instead of reversing his substitute's judgments, he had sometimes scored them out sheet after sheet, and put in judgments of his own!

Some of the things that were brought out were odd enough. In his bachelor household he kept with great care a book of fines, and when any accident happened the delinquent domestic was marked down as fined a penny or twopence; but the cat also was among the number of delinquents, and he frequently fined the cat!

Things began to look critical for the will, and one of the oddest facts was brought out, viz., that the learned man had an hallucination that he was the Chief of the Clan MacThomas. What was to be done with the like of that?

I set about looking into old books, and to my astonishment I found that there had been a Clan MacThomas. Thereupon I eked out the argument with the story, which I thought I was safe to tell, there being a MacDonald on the bench. So I narrated to the jury—MacDonald gravely listening and wondering what it was all coming to—how once, when you were all little, I had stayed in Kingussie, where there were two bankers, one of the name of MacPherson and the other of the name of MacIntosh.

The dispute between the MacPhersons and the MacIntoshes was, of course, the famous question all over the Highlands as to who was the head of the Clan Chattan. The vigour of the MacIntoshes was well known. They carried into argument their warlike propensities, which are made immortal in the lines:

> "Of all the clans MacKay
> She is the most ferocious,
> Excepting juist forbye
> The Shaws and MacIntoshes."

"Well," said I, "these bankers came to me as a lawyer and they put the case before me for my opinion, the one maintaining that the head of the Clan was MacPherson of Cluny, and the other that the head was the MacIntosh of MacIntosh. Now if a man," said I, "is not of sound disposing mind because he thinks himself the head of the Clan, where would any of us be who is of Highland extraction? As for these disputants, I took time to consider, and then I gave my opinion. I advised that the MacPhersons and the MacIntoshes were both minor sects of the Clan Chattan, and that the headship of the Clan was with the Shaws!"

There was a roar from the Court, but the Judge, gather-

ing himself together, ordered immediate silence, and the case proceeded to its close, with considerable splutterings here and there.

I do not ask you to believe that it was all fun. Indeed, you may be interested to hear this about the same case: The bulk of the learned sheriff's money had gone past his relatives and was dedicated to the restoration of the Cathedral of Kirkwall.

Now you have heard me before say what a spurious reputation advocates are apt to get because they spring upon the public things that look so learned or so clever, but are not theirs at all, but probably suggested by a shrewd solicitor. Here was another case of it. The solicitor said to me that in regard to this benefaction, which of course was denounced as futile and silly and unpractical and all the rest of it, he thought that Sir Walter Scott favoured the like of that in "The Pirate." So, sure enough, I fished up "The Pirate," and I read to the jury that passage in the fine novel which commends the restoration of St. Magnus Cathedral as one well worthy of the benefactions of any wealthy or patriotic son of the North. The passage directly bore upon the issue in hand; it affected the bulk of the estate, and, to make a long story short, the jury upheld the will.

Perhaps the fun, but certainly the literary allusion, helped them on the right road, because that it was a sound verdict I do not doubt.

* * * * *

Just let me give you another instance of how admirably the Scotch solicitors do their task and of how little and how seldom they get the proper credit for it.

I quite forget the name of the case: but at all events there was one witness in the box, and sure was I that he was lying—lying cleverly, deliberately, steadily. But there was no chink in his armour that I could see. Part of his story was that a certain transaction, of, I think, a commercial kind, had been carried out between him and his antagonist on a certain date, that he had taken care to set it down on paper at the time, and that from that date the parties had shaped their relations accordingly, and that he was, of course, right in his demand and his opponent was wrong. The case stood to win or to lose upon whether that man's evidence could be successfully upset.

Then the solicitor, a painstaking, wise man, very honest and very thorough, gave me the hint, for which I got all the credit and for which I deserved none, that the document which the witness was founding upon proved that he was a liar.

"Would your Lordship," said I, "be kind enough to look at the document?"

The Judge did so, and held it in his hand while I elicited over again the facts as to the date and circumstances when this bargain was come to, making the whole story clear as day, the witness adding at each stage his oath in support. The dates I cannot remember, but the fact you may draw from this illustration. The witness, we shall say, described a day in June, 1890, when the paper was got out and the memorandum made—all in June, 1890.

Said I to the Judge, "Would your Lordship hold that paper against the light?"—and then to the witness, "How do you explain, sir, that this memorandum, which you

say was written by you in June, 1890, was made upon paper which was not manufactured till the year 1893?"

The water-mark on the paper broke the case to pieces!

Now that is all about the law when he was at the Bar that you will ever hear from

Your most devoted

PARENT.

LETTER XXXVIII

THE MAKING OF A MINISTRY

9, *Bolton Gardens, S.W.*5.
November 17, 1920.

MY DEAR LASS,

This library here—thanks to your enterprise—is getting into decent order, and I have nothing to do but whip round my chair, and in a galaxy of little drawers I select the one that contains Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's letters.

The tide of public opinion was turning his way: What a satisfaction that his reward was coming! Alas! the satisfaction was mingled with sadness, for just at that juncture the marks of his failing health unmistakably appeared. He maintained his policy undauntedly, sagaciously unwinding perplexities, and no colleague ever came from his counsel without light; but it was touching to observe that more and more he leaned with an affectionate pressure on the staff of private friendship. And his humour did not fail.

He did love, strange to say, and loved passionately, whatever combination he could get of quiet amid the beauties of Nature with jollity among those he trusted. You may see in this simple letter to your mother, for instance, how the mixture works out. Private kindness, affectionate interest, and, over all, a sharp eye to public issues.

"*Belmont Castle,*
"*Meigle,*
"*Scotland.*
"*December* 1, 1904.

"DEAR MRS. SHAW,

"If you and your goodman and your daughter could come to us on the 16th till the Monday following it would be a real pleasure, and I hope by good luck you may be free; but I know that your metropolitan gaieties are many, and we poor country mice are out of it. *Do* come if you can, and if you brought your Oxonian our pleasure would be still greater. We cannot do much entertaining on the grand scale, but I would gather one or two congenial spirits.

* * * * *

"With our kind regards,
"Yours very truly,
"H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN.

"Will you ask your authority whether the Government plan about the Churches is considered likely to answer? I have to speak at Dunfermline in a few days, and should like to have his mind on it."

The reference to the Oxonian is, of course, to Alexander, to whom he was always kind. In an unguarded moment he had promised to speak at the Oxford Union during Alexander's presidency. He tried to back out: but was held to his bargain and went. During that visit he was photographed, the result being more of the man himself in his comfortable serenity than any other likeness that had ever been taken.

* * * * *

Unionism was rocking to its fall. It fought tenaciously to maintain its position, and it had within it a great store of ability. In my humble sphere of the Border Burghs

it never wavered. When the election of 1905 came on my opponents had the singular good fortune of securing Mr. Conan Doyle as their candidate—a gifted man, a clever writer, and very strongly against me on the issues of South Africa and Ireland.

On the latter he within a short time changed his mind and became, I think, an out-and-out Home Ruler. I have sometimes wondered whether Time—that great Illuminant—helped him towards a change of view on Africa also. But during the election he fought with vigour and emerged from the contest, although without success, yet without an enemy.

I was, of course, in London in those days of agitation, when Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman was sent for by the King; and I heartily enjoyed the comings and goings of all sorts and descriptions of expectants and aspirants.

An intensely human touch there was in their confidences. More than one of that class I have in my mind at this moment, for I recall once setting on them as follows: "Will you men remember this, that we cannot all be in office? There is ahead of us possibly success and possibly trial. People who do not get what they want are divided into two classes—the first are the sore heads, the second are the stout hearts." This sermon was of the genus "popular," that is to say, one which is severe in the application—but the application is always to the other man!

I resolved not to go near Sir Henry. But as time went on the difficulty was whether to stop the habit of going to talk over events which were stirring, or to keep up going under a kind of make-believe that there was nothing in which I was interested. It would have been out of the

question to continue that too long, so after a while I went in one afternoon to see him. It appeared that all the time he had been keeping his friendship warm.

After the interview I wrote an account of it, so to speak, red-hot, and before the details could escape my mind—wrote it down in a long letter to your mother. Her daily letters to me were a continual strength: she knew well—better than many courtiers—the currents of public events, and to her my replies at times of crisis were like confidential dispatches. A great burning out of letters took place, but I find that this one has been preserved.

Shall I let you see that letter? Well, it reflects no discredit upon anybody. It showed Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman as he was, and how he comported himself at a not uncritical turn of Imperial history. I have omitted a few words here and there, but otherwise you may take the letter to be almost exactly as I now copy it out, underlining and all.

December 8, 1905.

* * * * *

Then to Belgrave Square, which I reached at 2.12. One reporter at a side door was watching and timing, and, I think, kodaking the proceedings.

Sir Henry was at lunch, but Sinclair came and took me in beside him. I had lunched, but I took a glass of moselle and sat down at table. This morning I had written to Buchanan to tell him to stand firm, so I was relieved to hear C.B. break into public affairs at once. I had shaken him warmly by the hand, and he looked at me comfortably and said, " Ah, Thomas, it's you."

"Before we begin," said I, "how is her Ladyship?"

"Never was better," he said; "she likes the stir—no monotony here, I assure you. That poor door-bell!"

My anxiety overnight had been about an alleged intrigue to jockey the Prime Minister *out of the House of Commons and into the Lords.* The *Times* confirmed our worst fears by declaring that Grey had declined office except *on that condition.*

C.B. opened by saying, "Don't believe the *Times* newspaper!"

"My word!" I said, "I am glad. To be frank with you, I may just say that I thought they were hitting you at your weakest point—your good nature; but—I must say it—if you had yielded, *the country would have thought itself betrayed.*"

After a little, he said with a laugh, "Do you know it was the comicality of it that I could hardly get over. They were to serve *under* me, but on condition that they were not to be *with* me!"

By this time the bell was going, and he said, "Come!" and off he and I went to his morning-room and sat down together side by side. Then he opened out:

"You know it's been going on since Monday. The three—Asquith, Grey and Haldane—all indicated that *this was the condition.* But Asquith was always uneasy: he walked back and forward in this very room here, and he stood up just at that mantelpiece and said:

"'Here we are, on every conceivable point of policy agreed, and yet somehow something wrong. Suppose I go down to my constituents, and they say to me: "Would you tell us, were you not asked to be in the Government?" and I reply, "I was." And then they say, "Did you not get a good enough offer?" and I reply, "Well, the fact is, I was offered the Chancellorship of the Exchequer!" And then they say, "What's wrong, then?" and I say, "Oh, but my leader was to be in the Commons!" How shall I look? Then Grey goes, and he has to confess that he was given the offer of three great offices and got the one—the Foreign Office—which he chose. And *his* constituents say, "Well, what more *could* you want?" How foolish it all is! And Haldane too.'

* * * * *

"Well," said C.B., "this thing began on Monday; and I let it go on for three days; and then I said to each and all

of them, 'Now look here, I have been playing up till now.' The comicality of it, as I say, appealed to me. 'But now let me just say—*that it is I who am the head of this Government: it is I who have the King's Command: I am on horseback,* and you will be all pleased to understand that I *will not go to the House of Lords;* that I *will not have any condition of the kind imposed upon me, that you must take your own course, on that footing. Do you understand?*' Grey said, 'I cannot face the idea of Lord Rosebery attacking a Government of which I am a member.'" As C.B. said that he laughed and said, "Dear me, you are a man of distinction, and you are going to be swayed by another man to a course which you can't openly explain in any sort of way satisfactory to yourself!"

"So," says C.B., "they all came in—no conditions; no nothing: there they are."

Said I, "I hear that Morley has caused some trouble. Can that be true?"

"Not true at all. Asquith is to be Chancellor of the Exchequer, Morley goes to India, Grey to the Foreign Office."

"And the Colonies?" I asked.

"Oh, Elgin to the Colonies. Then about Haldane: he takes the War Office."

"Now, Tammas," he said, after a pause, and slowly tapping my knee: "what am I to do with you, my son? You are putting me in a plisky."

I knew what he meant. The letters which I had had from Redmond and O'Connor and Dillon had very strongly placed the Irish Office before me, but I was afraid to appear in any way to have a wish or preference on my own part, for it was *his* judgment I wanted to get. I felt that he knew far better than I did what was for the best. Had he lifted his finger and pointed me to Ireland, like a shot I would have gone there, never doubting his judgment. Then, after a little, he said:

"Lord Advocate? *You.* It is, remember, *the head of your profession, and it may be for a time only, but for a time you must go there. It is your natural post. Perhaps, after, it may be, some months, you may have to be put up higher.*

"I have seen John Redmond: he has been here. The Irish,

he says, want you to be Chief Secretary for Ireland. But I said to him, 'How can he? He would be leaving the work of his life, with all its avenues of advancement; he could not be asked to do such a thing.'

"'He would be the man most acceptable to the Irish people,' said Redmond."

And then C.B. said to me again:

"Remember your rightful place, to begin with, at least, is the head of your profession; you must look at it so."

I said, "Well, yes; it is your command; but please don't think I say 'Yes' on that account. I dare say, in fact, I believe, that your judgment is the sound one, and so please don't think there is any regret about it; that's all right. I really did not know what to think about it myself, and whatever decision you had come to I would have done my best, and I felt sure that you would be looking round about the affair, and honestly I am mightily glad that *you* have settled it one way or another."

* * * * *

"Who are you sending to the Chief Secretaryship?" I said.

"Well," he said, "James Bryce; he was a difficult man exactly to place."

Sinclair then entered the room (our talk had lasted nearly half an hour) and said: "Sir Henry Fowler and Lord Ripon are here. Fowler has waited eight minutes already; I only wanted you to know."

I smiled to Sir Henry and said, "Fowler has been going about the Reform Club like a hen on a het girdle"; and he laughed.

"Well, then," said I, "what do I do?"

"Oh, you can do nothing till Monday. I have to submit my list to the King. The King has been first-rate through it all. No difficulty in that quarter" (meaning, I think, that the King approved his standing absolutely firm with Asquith and Co.).

"Then you will write me?" said I.

"No," he said, "it's all right."

"I think you might drop me a note," I said; "I should like to have it for Elsie's sake."

"I see," he said; and we moved to the door, and he went upstairs to beard Fowler.

* * * * *

That is the history of the transaction to the best of my recollection. Throughout the interview his humour was always bubbling up, as for instance when he described certain men and their peculiarities, their hesitations, their prejudices, and their foibles; but always he felt his way back with a warm-hearted reference to their strong points.

* * * * *

The letter which, for your mother's sake, the Prime Minister had promised to write to me, came along. If you would care to read it, here it is:

"29, *Belgrave Square, S.W.*

"*December* 10, 1905.

"MY DEAR SHAW,

"I hope you will give me the great pleasure of submitting your name to the King for appointment as Lord Advocate.

"I need not tell you with what extreme satisfaction I shall discharge this duty, and how I rejoice that it falls to me to be the channel of conferring on so old and true and close a friend the highest honour in his profession and one of the chief offices in our common country.

"Yours very truly,

"H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN."

So there, my dear, your esteemed father was Lord Advocate for Scotland. How did he comport himself in that office? Ah! it is not for him to say, and even if he wished it, his memory would not disclose much. Is it not recorded in "Hansard"? And when you grope in "Hansard," is there not the other record also, the Statute Book of the Realm? No; you get no more from me!

It is the jollity of those days that I remember. Just

when everybody was on the *qui vive*, a few of us had a rattling dinner at the Café Royal. There were Lloyd George, Captain Seely, McKenna, Winston Churchill and myself. We discussed everything under the sun. I can't remember much more than that—except this, that there arose a great clamour amongst us as to who was to pay for the dinner! Captain Seely explained that he had just made £50 of profit on the sale of a boat.

"Well, as for me," says Winston, "I have at this moment a cheque for £1,000 from Macmillan in part payment of what is due to me for writing my father's life."

That settled it. It was agreed with acclamation that he should pay for the dinner!

* * * * *

Ere I leave these memories of Sir Henry I would like to carry the years forward just a little and to tell you what remains of the bundle of letters. He wrote to me from various places—amongst others, this from Balmoral, and you will see how even in the midst of his deep respect for and loyalty to his Sovereign, a humorous reference, in that direction, breaks out.

"*Balmoral Castle.*

"*October* 1, 1907.

"MY DEAR THOMAS,

"Now that I am in the country I feel braced up to write.

"The 30th? Of course, joyfully. You are all too kind. Perhaps you will, in the abundance of your leisure, tell me what I can say about Edinburgh. I have in this year plastered Glasgow for a big town and Montrose for a small one. On Friday I have to praise Peebles (for pleasure). I want a few fresh adjectives for the next noble Lucumo.

* * * * *

"The sun was shining on all the high summits here—outdoor and indoor—for the last three days. To-day Lochnagar is misty: I have not yet seen the intramural peak, but I am no feared.

* * * * *

"Kindest thoughts to all of you.

"H. C.-B."

Then, alas! come the letters with the deep black edge. Lady Campbell-Bannerman was gone. Once, behind the Speaker's chair, I asked him anxiously about her, knowing how ill she was; and he replied to me, with a deep look in his eyes: "Thomas—you know—the 'Pilgrim's Progress.'" Then he suddenly stopped, and we parted, very moved. I knew what he was thinking. The crossing of the River; and the Land of Beulah; and the company of the Shining Ones.

I went to Belmont to her funeral, being then the guest of Sir Francis Evans, who had a shooting up Glen Isla. When after the service I shook hands with him to go, he looked blankly at me, and sat down on a chair, saying, "Thomas, you are not to leave me to-night." And so I remained. And I wish to tell you that of that small company who remained no one was more considerate or more tender to him than Asquith. If there had ever been any failure to see eye to eye, I think surely that it must have then come to an end; and Sir Henry reciprocated the warmth, and I know, as I shall tell you in a minute, that he did so to the end.

His own health I do not think was ever the same. Honours came upon him: Freedoms of cities were conferred, and so on; yet you can see of course in these later letters how his faculty for fun began to be resumed, with

a joke now and again about public men, including Lord Rosebery, whom he always called "Barnbougle."

After a visit to Edinburgh he tells, in a letter of thanks about it to your mother, so gratefully worded as this:

"*Belmont.*
"*October* 31, 1907.

"DEAR MRS. SHAW,

* * * * *

"I was closely cross-examined by my two young ladies regarding all my proceedings. But no description of mine was adequate to your admirable arrangements for my comfort, and to the enjoyment which you and your young ladies contrived to put into my stay. I do not mention the men—they count for nothing.

"With very kind regards,
"Very sincerely yours,
"H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN."

During a short stay on the Continent he still kept his eye upon all that was going on, and he was grateful for any help that one could render to him even in a humble way with his own constituency meetings. I feel almost inclined to write you this letter out in full, and for the saddest of all reasons, dear Isabel, namely that it is the last letter he ever wrote to me. This is how it runs:

"*Hôtel Continental,*
"*Biarritz.*
"*December* 6, 1907.

"MY DEAR THOMAS,

"I hear of a most kind, unselfish, public spirited thing being done, in the shape of an engagement by a not unoccupied man,

to take the place of a disabled friend, and gratify a patient and faithful community by giving them a speech. If you know the man, give him a word of praise from me.

"I am established comfortably here for, I hope, some weeks, and if I do not get good from it, it will not be the fault of this place.

"The weather is unfavourable—boisterous wind and alternations of sunshine and slashing rain. But it is a' ane to Dandie: even indoors I get the fresh sea air which they say is best.

"I am pronounced to be 'tired out'—and the tiredness takes the form of asthmatic turns which are unpleasant (or worse) while they last, but which I am told arise purely from weakness and will disappear after a good rest. Nothing wrong organically or even functionally, they all say.

"This is a much more manly and outspoken part of the world than your vapid, sickly, ill-balanced Riviera: its faults I have not yet discovered. One advantage is that now we are between seasons; the Autumn French and Spanish have gone, and the Winter English not yet come. So we have plenty of elbow-room, and no bores yet discovered. Yes, one . . . ex-M.P. I have escaped him as yet.

All best thoughts and regards to your best of all halves and the young ladies. I only wanted to tell you of that generous man.

"Yours,

"H. C.-B."

Yes: his last letter. I saw him on his death-bed twice in Downing Street, in the break-up of his constitution, like a brave warrior sinking to rest. And he was thinking of others, too. I am not alluding to our own selves; but there is one thing that he said to me on the last occasion when I saw him that I should like you to know.

"Do you remember, Thomas, what I told you about Asquith?"

"Don't I?" said I; "I remember every word of it."

"Well," he said, "bear this in mind: Asquith is a fine fellow; he is a loyal fellow. Asquith has been like a son to me."

I never saw the dear, great, lovable man again.

> "Oh, but they say the tongues of dying men
> Enforce attention like deep harmony."

Good night, my dear girlie! I fear I have been a little moved, myself, with these rememberings.

Your loving

FATHER.

LETTER XXXIX

KEEPING STARS IN THEIR ORBIT

9, *Bolton Gardens, S.W.*5.

December 11, 1920.

DEAR MAIDIE,

I know that you want to hear a little about those men with whom the Lord Advocate found himself the associate after he and all the others had been ten years in Parliamentary opposition.

The gift which Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman had for what I would call the reconciliation of apparent opposites amounted to genius. Hence came that co-operation of men drawn from different schools of political thought which filled the enemy with surprise and which bore good fruit.

A good, distinguished Tory friend of mine had hoped publicly for the overthrow of his own party so as to provide fun for the country in the spectacle of the sheer impossibility of finding either talent or singleness of purpose in the Liberal camp. One Liberal more distinguished in literature than in politics said: "A queer stud, did you say? Ah! but they all come to the manger!" That was the kind of fluffy stuff that was floating in the air.

What was wanted was one common foundation, and the Prime Minister found that foundation in Liberalism

itself. And secondly what was wanted was a note of firm authority welding all together, and that Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, with urbanity and determination and strength, supplied.

The result of this variety in unity was harmony. Let me give you three examples taken from three spheres of action, namely, civil, military and foreign affairs.

I will take Mr. Lloyd George himself. We all knew even before he joined the Government—we should have been blind in Parliament if we had not known—how consummate were his powers, not only of public eloquence but of Parliamentary criticism and management. As I have told you, George and I had been closely associated. And no one enjoyed more than you children did the tales of our spirited adventures. He was younger and more vigorous than I, and he always took exercise with a hearty relish—for which simple fact let Europe be thankful. We played golf on some of these artificial English courses: Let us draw the curtain on those Radical foursomes. We were all, I hope and trust, better at politics than at the other game! When he stayed with us in Edinburgh I used to be struck not only with his political gifts but with his quickness of apprehension and with his powers of adapting everything in any field that he came across to the purpose of the argument that he had in hand. Of this I will give you an example which amused the Edinburgh political circles.

He was a great one for hearing sermons. One of the best in the morning from our own Mr. Dunbar would not satisfy him: he must be off in the evening to hear Dr. Whyte. He had, I think, the next day to address a meeting in Edinburgh on, of course, the follies and worse of

the Government of the day. It was that time in politics when Tariff Reform was sprung upon the country by Mr. Chamberlain after the disillusionment over the war. A disillusionment this was which I cannot but feel that Mr. Chamberlain, having visited South Africa, deeply shared. Well, it was then, and upon that topic of Tariff Reform, that the Unionist Party, if not at sixes and sevens, was at least at tens and threes. The task of Mr. Balfour might have been considered to be that he should give definite light and a definite lead upon the crucial and absorbing theme. But he did not see it thus; and he was so astute and so adroit as to keep his Party together without any personal committal whatsoever. Many a time the Liberals tried to corner him; many a time he was called on to stand and deliver; but on every occasion in a cloud of words he escaped, to the delight of all admirers of mental agility; and even while his followers were puzzled, they applauded to the echo. Now he appeared to be a Free Trader; now he appeared to be a Tariff Reformer; now it would almost appear as if he were neither; again it would almost appear as if he were both. Yet the party he led followed him.

To come back to Mr. Lloyd George. On the Sunday afternoon of which I speak I tossed over to him an amusing Glasgow book called "Wee Macgreegor"; would he care to look at it? You know the book well, and remember the scene where the boy sees the elephant at the circus and is astonished by its oscillating trunk. To my surprise the next evening in the midst of his speech Mr. Lloyd George, to the relish of his audience, entered upon an examination of the Tory Party, and he made some simile between it and the large, unwieldy and thick-skinned

elephant. How was it led? Alluding adroitly to the leadership of Mr. Balfour, he exclaimed, in the language of "Wee Macgreegor,"

"Maw, whit wey is its neb sae shoogly?"

Apart from these quips, his eloquence was then more sustained, better ordered, less conversational, than his style to-day, admirable and persuasive as that is. And he could touch the mind to a deep conviction and the heart with a high quickening. One of the most powerful passages which I remember in the Music Hall of Edinburgh was when he was pleading for the reality of patriotism in small nationalities, and how they cherished with a tenacious memory the adventures, the achievements and the sufferings of heroism: and he cited with a moving brilliancy the case of Hofer. To a man like him, and in such an atmosphere, the Wallace episodes were weapons ready to hand.

This, then, was one school of thought, to which, of course, I ardently belonged, which for shortness' sake may be called the Radical Pro-Boer School, earning that approval in some quarters and that contempt in others with which we were all familiar. But once at the Board of Trade Mr. Lloyd George speedily showed the beginnings of that administrative talent and that driving power which have made him in these later years like a messenger of hope and saving to his country.

* * * * *

Now another school. Take Haldane himself. Suddenly he was placed by his Chief, to whom having once given his allegiance he kept his pledge unwaveringly, in that post, the Secretaryship for War, which of all others Sir Henry knew best. And when I think of what that

selection was able to do, by placing the capacious industry and brain of Lord Haldane into a definite orbit, and into such an orbit, instead of permitting it to fly off at a tangent into political space, I feel very grateful for my country's sake.

Who knew better than Bannerman what it was to disband the militia? Who knew better than he the varied camps of military thought by which the novel proposal of a territorial force capable of indefinite expansion was to be canvassed? One day of lack of harmony between the shrewd sturdy chieftain and the subtle philosophical follower might have undone a project which has been charged with inestimable benefit to the Empire.

> " Blow, blow, thou winter wind!
> Thou art not so unkind
> As man's ingratitude."

This is what I often say when I hear people talk about Lord Haldane. I dare say I am a partial witness, having been his colleague for many years in the Supreme Court of the Empire; but, harking back to politics, I cannot but feel grateful that the great fund of common sense on the part of both parties saved a situation and a split which might have brought the nation to the verge of ruin.

* * * * *

It is the same with Grey. The influence of Lord Rosebery upon Sir Edward Grey, who had been his Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, might appear to have retarded his development and increased his detachment. Yet a touchstone of his undoubted Liberalism was Ireland; for he has throughout been its true friend, never deviating, so far as I know, from the Gladstonian cast of mind with regard to that country. But all this and the definiteness

of his place in what I may call comprehensively the non-Bannerman school, makes the transaction under which he was lifted to Cabinet rank one for which on every side the country may well be thankful.

Just recently I had occasion in looking over Blue Books to consider what were the greatest dispatches of my time. Speaking, I hope, quite impartially, and certainly with the judgment of one who is now remote from public life, but whose sole business in life is to make judgments, I would name these greatest dispatches, or sets of dispatches, as three in number.

The first, and they remained the first, in my estimation, for many years, were those of Mr. F. W. Reits, State Secretary of the Transvaal in August and September, 1899. I should put it at least thus—that to the impartial mind these stand, for riveting cogency and for convincing power, in a very striking contrast with the narrow and niggling cleverness of the British diplomacy of that day.

The second in rank among great dispatches was that of Mr. Morley, when, shortly after entering the India Office, he settled for many years that controversy then at an acute stage between the military and the civil power. Each he placed in position, but he lifted the latter to its sound predominance in such a way as to make us and the Indian Empire his debtors.

These two sets of dispatches to which I have referred reached a very high level. But a higher still was attained in those so simply worded by Sir Edward Grey in July and August, 1914, that critical period of the history of the world.

I do not like making quotations, but for your sake, dear Isabel, it is well that you should remember, and that clearly

and vividly, these words from the communication made on the 30th July, 1914, by our Foreign Secretary to Sir Edward Goschen, our Ambassador in Berlin. The question of Peace and War was trembling in the balance. Germany, astonished that Britain should protest against the violation of treaty and of honour by the invasion of Belgium, had still to receive another surprise in the objection which this country tendered to the proposal that we might be bought off from defending right, by an engagement upon the part of Germany that the existing boundaries of France in Europe would not be disturbed.

To this Sir Edward Grey replied in these words:

"What he asks us is in effect to engage to stand by while French Colonies are taken and France is beaten, so long as Germany does not take French territory as distinct from the Colonies.

"From the material point of view, such a proposal is unacceptable, for France, without further territory in Europe being taken from her, could be so crushed as to lose her position as a Great Power, and become subordinate to German policy.

"Altogether apart from that, it would be a disgrace for us to make this bargain with Germany at the expense of France, a disgrace from which the good name of this country would never recover."

But the gravity of the dispatch deepens and its vision widens when it deals with no less a topic than the security for the future peace of the world. Listen to this:

"And I will say this: If the peace of Europe can be preserved and the present crisis safely passed, my own endeavour will be to promote some arrangement to which Germany could be a party, by which she could be assured that no aggressive or hostile policy would be pursued against her or her allies by France, Russia and ourselves jointly or separately. I have desired this and worked for it, as far as I could, through the

last Balkan crisis, and Germany having a corresponding object, our relations sensibly improved. The idea has hitherto been too Utopian to form the subject of definite proposals, but if this present crisis—so much more acute than any that Europe has gone through for generations—be safely passed, I am hopeful that the relief and reaction which will follow may make possible some more definite rapprochement between the Powers than has been possible hitherto."

In my humble judgment this part of the dispatch brings the best thinking of Grotius up to date. I have many times been grateful that it was the voice of England which read that lesson.

In these later years, as you know, much of my spare time was taken up in trying to get the League of Nations Society set on its legs; but I must tell you, if I have the chance, something more definite about that some other day. Meantime I should only say this, that it was a dispatch like that which I have just cited that gave precedence and substance and a near and living reality to the idea, which the world so slowly grasps, of a League of Nations.

Has this letter been too long? Well there, in that Government of which I was a member was to be found that ganglion of influences gathered together, and then radiating through the Empire and through history, and communicating a power which, with many mistakes, was still one of healing and of right.

You see how high I place the Campbell-Bannerman Government, and you see also how I think the world would have suffered if its differing units had been permitted to diverge, to dissipate their energies, or to perish in the atrophy of isolation.

Your affectionate

S. OF D.

LETTER XL

TO THE GILDED CHAMBER

9, *Bolton Gardens, S.W.*5.

December 24, 1920.

ISABEL, MY DEAR,

It was, I suppose, a bit of an event for all you children when your father became the Lord Advocate for Scotland. A great personage he was in former days, was the King's Advocate. Some of the line were famous; some were a bit notorious in their time, clever enough, but strange persons to be entrusted with so large a power over the liberty of the subject. If it had not been that I was so hustled, I dare say I might have reflected with trembling upon being successor to the bluidy MacKenzie! The high office, the Crown practice, the private practice, the occasional advisings in Cabinet Committees, the Parliamentary attendance: put together they were rather a strain —especially so for a reason which was by and by to put me under the surgeon's knife.

In those days the Attorney-General for England had his £10,000 a year, was debarred from private practice, but was briefed in thousands upon thousands for Crown work. In Scotland the Advocate had his £5,000 a year, could take what private practice he could gather in the scraps of his time, but had to do all the Crown work for nothing. This curious difference still, I believe, exists,

but why it should be so—I mean the scheme about Crown and private work—I am sure I cannot say.

In my own case, although a good deal came privately, my place was the House of Commons, with now and again a sortie into Scotland. As for Scotland, never was a Lord Advocate better served by a Solicitor-General and a Crown Agent than I was by Ure and Sir William Haldane. Once the lines of even the most ticklish cases were settled —and it was only upon the most ticklish cases that they sought my guidance—I had no fears whatsoever that all would be well handled. These offices were never filled by more capable men. Often I leaned heavily upon them, but they never failed. You see what real and standing comforts I had?

It is a good rule that no man be a judge in his own cause. Lawyers have been known to break the rule—break it deplorably—when they have begun to write about their legal and official doings. Anyhow, you don't get one word from me on that subject. Can you not wander at leisure in those Gardens of the Blest, Hansard and the Statutes of the Realm?

In Parliament we were faced with a keen and intellectually strong Opposition. While the country was forcing the Government forward towards Radical legislation, and much of it, it was faced in front by steady and most capable criticism. It was a time for having one's wits about one. The failing health of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman made all eyes turn to his successor; and, when his death occurred, Mr. Asquith stepped into the vacant Premiership, and the choice of His Majesty met with the heartiest approval, not of one party but of all parties in Parliament and in the country.

It is not generally known, but it is the fact, that the acceptance of the seals of that office from the Sovereign puts the Premier in the position, not of taking over a Government, but of forming a Government of his own. So we were all out of office. And we went on, on the principle of holding the fort. One or two dropped out, notably Lord Elgin from the Colonial Office. Mr. Asquith was in every dealing I ever had with him kindness and consideration; and he always loved any drollery that was going. Somebody said to me one day, "Lord Advocate"—and I stopped him: "Not exactly," said I, "but *locum tenens!*" When Mr. Asquith heard of it—he had forgotten all about Dover House—he wrote me a charming letter. So there I was planted again in the high office.

Alas! but not for long. Once more it happened; again a bolt from the blue; again I was confronted by the totally unexpected. On the 2nd of February, 1909, there occurred at Cap Martin the death of Lord Robertson, the brilliant Parliamentarian and Scotch Lord of Appeal.

Was there ever such a cantrip of fortune? On many platforms I had spoken freely and I hope faithfully and without undue compliment of the Gilded Chamber, and then Dame Fortune comes along and she says: "No more of platforms for you; get you to the Gilded Chamber yourself and stay you there for the rest of your natural life!" I was submissive and I went.

What of your principles now? said the wags. And I feebly replied: "My principles are quite intact. (1) I am still against the hereditary principle; (2) I am still in favour of the payment of members; and (3) I am still in favour of early rising!"

Do I aggravate you, Isabel, by not giving you the serious side of that transaction? Well, dear, I made notes at the time. I have them by me as I write. But no: you cannot have them.

As some people would view it, it was perhaps a strong thing to have passed by the Chair of the illustrious Stair, the Chair of Duncan Forbes and of so many great Presidents down to the majestic Inglis himself, who had encouraged me from his high place when I was but a youth. Let these details, however, stand aside. The impressions remain. The Future and the Past seemed so dissevered. As for the Past, I was veritably heart-sore to leave the House of Commons. As for the Future, then opening before me, it presented to me those august lineaments of jurisprudence and of law in which they still appear.

Law and Jurisprudence; they are high, sedate, and stately things, but they are beyond the range of definition. You cannot define a great landscape; you cannot define a noble statue. Description alone must serve, and description must take its cast from the mould of the describer's mind. I have served twelve years, humbly helping in the greatest jurisdiction in the world; but still I hesitate even to describe. My imperfect language reaches only to this single word. Jurisprudence is the ordered march of justice. When order is forsaken and the march becomes either a fevered rush, or an ill-balanced and fantastic measure, then an ordinance truly divine has been debased, the steps of justice falter, and the ends of justice fail.

Next to the higher reaches of literature and of statesmanship, do not the search for, the unfolding of, the administration of, the distribution of, justice—do not these

things make an excelling call among all the secular affairs of men?

In writing these letters I should have remembered that lightsomeness which is your due. But somehow—not for the first time—I have got down among the deep gravities of life. Pray forgive me.

Good night! Good night!

Your own

TRUE LOVE.

LETTER XLI

THE IMPORTATION OF ARMS

Craigmyle.
New Year's Day
of 1921.

My Child,

What a strange New Year's Day! Here I am, between five and six hundred miles north of London, and for hours I have been through fields and woods, gun in hand, perspiring in the sun. The air is balmy—so mild that the flies rise thickly in the warmth from hedgerow and ditch; no leaf falls, for the recent gales have stripped the deciduous trees quite bare. But the others—the hollies, the spruces, and the Scotch and silver firs, stand resplendent in green, bristling for the tempest and the snow.

The association of ideas is sometimes an association of opposites; I have passed from this peace to turmoil, from faith and hope, to disquiet and the bounds of despair. This being translated nationally means that in thought I have crossed from Scotland to Ireland. As I truly love both countries, that is a hard saying.

Some time ago I wrote to you of that "touch and go" episode when my life was so nearly turned into the channel of Irish administration. That was on the public side. Then on the private side came the day when the great Irish surgeon sought Elsie's hand in marriage: and of course their busy life—to him the glory of saving life and

to both the ministry of brightening it—has kept in Ireland a goodly part of our interest and love.

But these are not what I wanted to be at in this letter; for in my wanderings to-day it occurred to me that there were three years in succession in which, so far as making marks on the memory is concerned, Ireland and some events in it struck deep. In 1914 I presided over the Royal Commission as to the importation of arms into the Dublin district. In 1915 I lay in Dublin at the gates of death. And in 1916 I personally witnessed in the Irish capital the outbreak of the Sinn Fein Rebellion.

* * * * *

So much has happened there, and here, and in Europe, during those six years, that to look up the pages of the Royal Commission Report "into the circumstances connected with the Landing of Arms at Howth on July 26, 1914," is as if one were turning on the light over transactions half a century old.

I was to have gone alone upon the mission. But Mr. Walter Long, representing the Unionist Party, suggested to the Government that the Commission should be broadened by the inclusion as my colleagues of a judge from, so to speak, each of the two sides of Irish opinion. On being appealed to, I expressed the view that Mr. Long was unquestionably right. In the event we were able to conduct the Inquiry with complete accord and to present a Report which was unanimous in every particular.

"On the afternoon of Sunday, the 26th July, a yacht entered the Harbour of Howth, about eight and a half miles from Dublin, and was met by a body of about 1,000 Irish Volunteers. They took possession of the landing-

place, and unloaded from the yacht a quantity of arms and ammunition. Each man possessed himself of a rifle. Some other rifles were conveyed away along with some ammunition by motor-cars and wagons."

Since a Proclamation of the previous December arms had become forbidden imports; so that this was smuggling; a plain case for the Customs Authorities. It was notorious, however, that this smuggling had been going on, in Ireland, that is to say, in Ulster. It was notorious that the Customs Authorities had never suppressed it, or obtained aid to suppress it, in Ireland—that is to say, in Ulster.

Whether what was so notorious was true, we had no jurisdiction to inquire. Here was the rub. We were appointed on the Howth case alone, or rather on its lamentable sequel. We had no power, even if we had so inclined, to investigate what importation of arms, if any, had been made at Belfast or any of the Ulster ports, or as to whether the Government showed, there, a vigilance which supported the law or a laches which lowered it and so encouraged its defiance. Had we started *that*, we might not have got to the bottom of it yet. Here was a not unfamiliar affair. An intense public clamour: stilled by the appointment of a Royal Commission: and the terms of the remit so drawn, wilfully or unwittingly, as to shut out vital sections of the truth.

We had not long started with the Inquiry till we came to realize that. But we had to stick to our text. The sequel of the importation was a sorry business. The Customs Authorities did not move. But others did, and, as we unanimously found, without consultation with responsible superiors and without the bounds and sanction of law. The police were called out in force; then the

military; some arms were seized; numbers of people, furious at this turn of affairs, followed the military with insulting behaviour into Dublin. In Bachelors' Walk the soldiers turned in wrath, and in the confusion fired point-blank into the unarmed crowd, killing three and injuring thirty-eight persons.

We had to unravel the story, and we were entirely agreed in holding that neither on the civil nor the military side was the procedure warranted by law. That law we investigated, analysing the Statutes; and we devoted a special chapter to that delicate but most important inquiry, namely, the scope and limits of military duty in a civil *émeute*. These things are worth learning. Alas! when the crisis comes, they are kept in the study instead of being used in the street. Will either civilians or military ever learn them and give heed? Above all, will it ever be so in Ireland? Still we grope on, in the darkness, praying for the dawn.

That broil is not forgotten, but it is past. A few deaths, a few woundings, sad and tragical as they were, were as nothing compared to the underlying significance of the affair; and *that*, owing to the terms of our Commission, it was beyond our province to get at. My distinguished and learned colleagues and I felt this. Here was a something passing out of our hands, but the correctitude of the position precluded our getting down to those basic causes which were as wide as the administration of Ireland.

We could not part with the problem thus. So we boldly stated our conjecture, told how in the circumstances there was no evidence, but ventured our emphatic opinion as to what its awful meaning for Ireland would be if the

conjecture were true. Was it true? Men in Ulster knew. The Irish administration, ah! how great was its responsibility if it knew: how great was its responsibility if it did not know!

Read these scrupulously careful sentences. Can any man doubt their soundness?

"If the administration of the law in Ireland or the action of the Executive had been characterized by partiality or discrimination as between localities or classes of Your Majesty's subjects we should not have hesitated to condemn this, not only as wrong in itself, but as provocative of those very hostilities and animosities among and between sections of the population which it should be the object of all proper administration to allay. To take the instance in hand—if through the action of the Executive Government a discrimination had been made under which the seizure of arms had been forbidden in Belfast and ordered in Dublin, or if in the one possession and parade of contraband arms had been allowed, and in the other interdicted and treated as a crime by the Government of the day—we should not have hesitated to connect the unfortunate and mischievous results with this unfortunate and mischievous cause. . . . We may note one singular illustration of how quickly the view of indiscriminate or uneven administration is apprehended and resented. When the order to seize rifles was given, eighteen of the police, whose obedience and discipline are notorious, refused to obey. One of their number who was examined before us gave their reason, viz., that the disarming could surely not be legal as it had not been done in Belfast. The eighteen were at once withdrawn from action, and two of them, including the witness referred to, were dismissed on the following evening. We only cite the incident to illustrate how disastrous to contentment and to order it would be if the law were partially or unevenly administered."

But you ask, "Father, was the conjecture true?" Was that one of the Sorrows of our beloved Island?

Ah, my dear, do not ask. These are questions for the Muse of History.

From a photograph by Valentine & Sons, Ltd., Dundee.

CRAIGMYLE.

Besides, how late it is! I fling another log or two on the fire, thinking still of Ireland, but of another visit to it, a visit in the spring of the following year, and of that adventure which I may speak to you of to-morrow, an adventure when I had a bout with the notorious Enemy with the Scythe, who had dogged my steps for years.

Your ever affectionate

FATHER.

LETTER XLII

THE SWISH OF THE SCYTHE

Craigmyle.

January 4, 1921.

DEAR LASS,

The mountains are robed in white, and the foothills are swathed in a delicate tracery of snow. The hoar-frost is on the ground, and in the glens and the hollows the thin white mists rise like an exhalation. Five years ago I had my doubts whether I should ever see such scenes again.

The steady mass of professional cares was up to the strength limit; but when on top of those came the Boer War and the Church debacle, the stand to be taken about these things nearly made an end of your respected parent. There can be no doubt that, owing to those strained and crowded hours, the uncertain dietary and sometimes no dietary at all, the night travelling, the great gatherings, there began those years of recurrent trouble which physicians could not diagnose but which developed quickly during the years of the Lord Advocacy.

Hardly a day passed of all the term of that high office when I was free from pain, and, without the sterling helpfulness and watchful care of the home circle and of my secretaries, I could not have held on. Buoyancy went out of life, and it was only when I was on my legs in the House of Commons that it came back. Before I left that House

the recurrent had become chronic, and—not to put too fine a point upon it—a certain interior was in urgent need of alterations and repairs. A year or two without improvement: a year or two more and things growing worse; then, in the spring of 1915, I packed up my traps en route for Ireland.

Should I ever recross the Channel? Who knew? Little was said to the dear ones, except that I was to rest and recuperate in the good Wheeler's Nursing Home: *I* knew that it was the surgeon's knife, and that I was near the gates of death. Alexander's affectionate anxiety could not be stilled, and he quietly followed me.

I may tell you that your worthy brother-in-law strongly protested against being the performer. He was not going, said he, to start slicing up his relations! There was a good deal of fun, but it closed up when I said that I could almost hear the swish of the scythe, and that if he would not operate I was quite content to die. So he buckled to.

Never was a man more in luck. My affairs were all arranged. I was in the best of hands, human and divine. And so were they, the best of all the earth, whether I was with them or away.

The fear of death seems to me an incredible thing. Life and Immortality have been brought to light. The true Life is to come.

This lamentation about having to face death is partly paganism and partly conceit. Paganism, because at the pinch the belief in a God of Truth and Wisdom has vanished and there is a tumult of fear at the prospect of that very moment when we move into the Arms of Love. And the conceit of it! This over-valuing by otherwise quite sensible people of their own little allotment on

Earth's surface and in Earth's history : it makes one a little bit impatient to see the sorry spectacle so often.

All this : how old-fashioned it is ! But, my dearest, there are at least two things about this faith. It wears well ; and, at the hour of trial, it does not fail.

Perhaps it helped to save my life, giving the daring deed a fair and even chance. The buoyancy returned : the gnawing pain was gone. I was a rebel once again. God save Ireland !

Good night, dear child.

Your loving

FATHER.

LETTER XLIII

THE FIRST SINN FEIN REBELLION

Craigmyle.

January 5, 1921.

MY BELOVED ISABEL,

As the novels say: One year elapsed. I returned to Ireland. It was Eastertide, and there was nothing whatever to suggest an impending tragedy or the spilling of blood. On the morning of Easter Monday I motored off into the Wicklow Hills to fish; at half-past five I returned to Dublin, where all was strangely quiet.

To a London daily at the time I contributed a series of articles on my next five days' experiences, and I shall make an extract or two. The first Sinn Fein rebellion had broken out. It is all part of history now, but let me tell you a point or two, here and there, still vivid.

Let us begin at the beginning:

"At the door in Fitzwilliam Square I was welcomed with a curious sigh of relief.

"'It's great doings we've been having since your Lordship lift us,' said the Irish housemaid to me on the threshold. She was unable to keep silent. 'Them Sinn Feiners is shooting, something awful. Mr. Wheeler's been run off his feet all the day: there's officers in the Nursing Home badly hit with them bullets, and at Mercer's it's dead and dying they are,' etc., etc."

The insurgents had dug trenches in St. Stephen's Green, and from these they sniped, and their fire concen-

trated on the Shelburne Hotel, which, when Sir Horace Plunkett and I passed next day, was rather a woe-begone sight, its glass smashed with bullets and its windows barricaded with bedding. But the incredulous curiosity of the populace no military regulation seemed to be able to restrain. I shared the feeling myself.

In fact, in the twilight I broke bounds. I escaped from zealous guardianship, and found my way to Stephen's Green. There were small gatherings of people here and there, with no traces of real alarm, but many signs of real curiosity. The firing was slacking off. I saw the stopped tramcars, and the overturned carts and other obstacles. The so-called barricades were poor affairs, inartistically put together, incomplete as barricades, and suitable merely as shelters here and there for individual snipers.

One manœuvre was certainly new to military annals. I had been interned in the Nursing Home, during the doctor's rushes to the wounded in hospital and elsewhere: and of course the staff, with their pleasant recollections of my case last year, thought that I was still under their jurisdiction! And when the hue and cry about me breaking bounds was raised, they formed a posse—uniformed, gentle, but very resolute—and they tracked me to St. Stephen's Green, surrounded me, scolded me, and marched me out of danger. Very imposing affair!

Besides curiosity, there was a sense of affront on the part of these crowds of spectators. And when the military was poured into Dublin I feel almost certain that there was a sense of relief and gratitude. This distinguishes that outbreak from probably all the others which have succeeded. These soldiers, it has to be remembered, were

disciplined men. They lined the streets, and this I saw with my own eyes, namely, that for hospitality soldiers never at such a task had had such a time. In Nassau Street, for instance, the people came out and were supplying them with apples, biscuits and bananas—one woman going from man to man with her great teapot and a cup. Fraternizing with the gallant Tommy was general.

This, mark you, was after severe fighting, after the seizure of the Post Office, the destruction of great parts of Abbey Street, and after a monitor in the Liffey had blown Larkin's headquarters to bits. The sight of this filled me with a strange hopefulness, and, notwithstanding the hubbub, I wrote down this :

"As the night drew on, the heavy firing, the explosion of hand grenades, and the rattle of musketry grew severe. The sky was lit up by the flames from a part of Sackville Street and its hinterland. This hinterland, a side street of buildings, was being burnt out—it was said to make clear range for an artillery attack on the General Post Office. Against the background of flame stood beautifully out the dome of a new building—I think the Royal College of Science. Was it an omen? Against the lurid and tragic background of its history, was a new, a better Ireland, to stand forth? With the dawning of another day the background—flame and smoke and much that was old—would have gone, but the new dome would catch the sun. Was that, too, an omen? And so to bed."

And this also :

"Where are the police? There are no police. A uniform was too tempting a target for the Sinn Fein snipers, and the police have been disbanded or have taken to mufti. But there is no general disorder—not at all. On the contrary, the general demeanour of the people, their bravery and good humour and courage, their kindness and friendship towards the soldiery, and their mutual helpfulness—all this is beyond praise."

Alas! alas! Why were my hopes, why were the hopes

of millions, blasted? With my own eyes I had seen in the Dispensary of Mercer's the rifle taken by a priest from a wounded Sinn Feiner. It was engraven with the crown and star and marked—

" Deutsche Waffen und
" Munitions Fabriken,
" Berlin,"

and it had all the minute numbering of Prussian detail. Here was an Ireland tempted with German munitions, and one cannot doubt tempted with German money. Yet with my eyes I had seen that Ireland's people wanted to be our friends.

Why were our hopes blasted? Because, my dear, the psychological moment—the moment of fraternizing—was lost. The Rebellion was put down, but in the manner of its putting down no heart was won. Martial law prevailed; the country was scoured far and wide for arms, and instead of a quick peace, one or two selected deaths, and then a wide amnesty, there came the slow-footed announcement that to-day so many had been executed, then in a day or two others had paid the last penalty; and so day and death followed day and death, till the whole heart of Ireland revolted, and the language changed: one heard not now of penalty but of sacrifice: and still the bloody task was not over; and men far and wide began to hate the England that made these recurring martyrdoms.

What is martial law? It may have its awful uses, and it must needs follow the tide of conquest. But it is no law: it is the helter-skelter struggle of the top-dog. And in a civil broil, what are the things that are wanted to commend a peace? Are they not understanding, sym-

pathy, forgiveness, reconciliation? Of those things martial law is not the instrument, for it is an instrument without a heart.

I hear the wind among the pines. The long night is closing in, and the storm-clouds are descending. To-morrow the earth will be vestured in snow.

Your bethochtit

FATHER.

LETTER XLIV

RIGHT TO WORK AND DUTY TO WORK

9, *Bolton Gardens, S.W.*5.
January 28, 1921.

ISABEL, MY DEAREST,

In a letter to you some time ago I described how, in the beginning of the year 1920, the task was laid upon me of being President of the "Court of Inquiry concerning Transport Workers—Wages and Conditions of Employment of Dock Labour."

We met in the Court of Criminal Appeal and the scene was interesting. The problem to be investigated was as acute as this, that upon its settlement rested the avoidance of a strike at every port in the United Kingdom, of hardship to every home in the land, and of misery and want on a heartbreaking scale. What would happen should a dispute in this business of dock labour stop our sea-borne imports as well as our export trade, and so deny to the body of our people the very necessaries of life? Who could tell?

Well, I was informed that the crowd within those walls were not curiosity hunters, but were men representing employers and employed from every important port in the Kingdom. And I think that this thought was in the back of all our minds: that we should let the subject evolve itself without passion or prejudice, but simply as an investigation of the rival courses suggested and of whether

these were for evil or for advantage, for peril or for safety. Above all, the supreme need lay upon us to face difficulties both with caution and with courage. We were there, in short, to let both sides have, alike in the procedure which achieved the result and in the result itself, a square deal.

On the Court I had the honour to act along with four representatives of Employers and four representatives of Labour, and once we got into our stride these very able men worked every one of them towards that end. And somehow we felt that this spirit, which was admirably helped by brilliant advocacy, was having an educative effect on the representative gathering. Here was no ordinary trade dispute, no violence, no overbearing, but each party heard for all the best that it could make of its side of the truth. Many of these men had not believed that there was any other side to the dispute but one. To unlearn that prejudice is surely an education. Thus the way was prepared for the acceptance of an arbitrative award.

Yet neither party, nor perhaps even the Government itself, which had set up the Court, was prepared for the lessons which were read to them each and all. The settlement of wages was not the mere fixing of a figure; that Court touched more than passing causes and it could not but lift the curtain upon wider and abiding problems. The outstanding one of these was what I may call the status of Labour itself—its economic status, its moral status—with all the responsibilities which this involved. Near the very centre of this trouble was one topic with a heartless past—the dependence of our dock and harbour trade upon casual labour. This was a past for revolt

against which one at least of my respected colleagues had stood in the dock.

I do not want you to forget the like of this, for instance, which has appeared to learned students to be of historical and economic significance, as even marking a stage in the uplift of society. The majority of the Court reported thus:

"The Court is of opinion that labour frequently or constantly unemployed is injurious to the interests of the workers, the ports, and the public, and that it is discreditable to society. It undermines all security, and is apt to undermine all self-respect upon the workers' part. It is only among those who have sunk very far and whom the system itself may have demoralized, that it can be accepted as a working substitute for steady and assured employment. In one sense it is a convenience to authorities and employers, whose requirements are at the mercy of storms and tides and unforeseen casualties, to have a reservoir of unemployment which can be readily tapped as the need emerges for a labour supply. If men were merely the spare parts of an industrial machine, this callous reckoning might be appropriate; but society will not tolerate much longer the continuance of the employment of human beings on those lines.

"The system of casualization must, if possible, be torn up by the roots. It is wrong. And the one issue is as to what practical means can be adopted of readily providing labour, while avoiding cruel and unsocial conditions.

"So serious has the position become that it has evolved habits of mind and body on the part of the workmen themselves which are detrimental to them and on a wide scale deeply injurious. Many workers have got into the habit of thinking that day labour is a sign of independence, and that labour secured even for a week leaves them devoid of that liberty to do nothing which they have come to prize. As in so many other cases mentioned in this Report, this habit of mind is in no respect sanctioned by the leaders of the men, and, as properly urged by them, one of the true lines of reform in this trade will be the abolition of the daily wage system and the substitution therefor of the payment of wages weekly."

With the uplifting of the status of dock labour there came also into full view the problem of the standard of living for human beings. Upon this problem philanthropists and sociologists had worked for two generations, but it had been brought to acuteness and extreme urgency by the high level of prices reached during the War.

On that problem this was the deliverance:

"The true and substantial case presented by the dockers was based upon a broad appeal for a better standard of living. What is a better standard of living? By this is not meant a right to have merely a subsistence allowance, in the sense of keeping the soul and body of the worker together, but a right to have life ordered upon a higher standard, with full regard to those comforts and decencies which are promotive of better habits, which give a chance for the development of a greater sense of self-respect, and which betoken a higher regard for the place occupied by these workers in the scheme of citizenship. The Court did not discourage this view; on the contrary, it approved of it; and it is fair to the Port Authorities and employers to say that its soundness was not questioned. In the opinion of the Court the time has gone past for assessing the value of human labour at the poverty line."

* * * * *

What then, with a new status of labour and with a higher standard of living—what then? Had not these rights of labour their correlative in its duties? Must not labour accept also its measure of responsibilities, dignifying its sphere and justifying its place in the new scheme of things?

This question brought us up not only to labour's reward but to labour's return, not only to standards of living but to standards of honour. On these things the Court spoke thus:

"When in the ordinary business of life the common standards, say, of time, money, weight or measure, are made matters of bargain, they, of course, become for each of the parties standards of honour; and there is just as little justification, say, for one man giving short time as for another giving short weight. Each is upon the equal footing of being condemned by contract, by law, and by the principles of fair dealing. These things are quite well known, and the habit of ignoring them in any department of life is a habit against which all enlightened men, and amongst these the Court emphatically includes the leaders of labour, resolutely set their faces."

* * * * *

"Upon the second point, the course of enlightenment does not seem to have made the progress which might have been anticipated. The Court cannot be blind to the fact that there is, not arising from exceptional causes but as part of a deliberate policy, the adoption in not a few cases of a system of slowing down of output. Blame in this respect can only be imputed to a minority of the men interested in this Inquiry. The great majority see the system in its true light. The system known as 'ca' canny' is loss on every side. The workman gains nothing in time. Even with regard to his habits and character, as well as the dignity of his calling, the things which to every decent man are really precious, loss and deterioration and injury occur. It must need be so under a system which substitutes for honest work a scheme of make-believe. To take the illustration given, it is not a case of short time in the apparent bulk, it is time adulterated, just as the other case, say, the case of a merchant, who would make up weight by moistening his sugar or mixing it with sand. There is one answer, and one only, to all such devices: honesty forbids."

I hope that I have not bored you with these sentences. Perhaps you will agree that they should not be entirely buried in a Blue Book.

And remember this also. I share the regrets of so many at the deficiencies of the economic education of our people—not of one class but of all classes. I share the aspirations of sociologists. But beneath both regrets and

aspirations lies a something in the moral sphere: in theology men call it righteousness; in law, justice; in the life of man it is honesty. When capital is squandered—except it be in war—the fragments of it may be ingathered in other hands. But it is not so with labour or with time. Labour withheld: only the severest strain can ever replace that. Time squandered, is time lost for ever. These things are no doubt so: but yet beneath all is another essential fundamental truth, that the withholding of contract labour and the adulteration of contract time do violence to fair dealing. It is that which gives serious men pause—not simply that a loss is involved which makes for poverty and want, but because "Honesty forbids."

But when men deplore the too frequent departure from standards of honour, do not be too downhearted. That is, that must be, a passing phase. It is the vicious remnant of an evil past. It is of good cheer that of seven members of the Dock Inquiry Court who signed these outspoken words, four of them were able, leading, representative working men. A better day is dawning—the day of the right to work and the duty to work.

"We walk the wilderness to-day,
The promised land to-morrow."

Have you read all this letter, without skipping? If so, you are a good and thoughtful maidie, and you have pleased a

Very austere

PARENT.

LETTER XLV

"TRUTH AND JUSTICE THEN"

1, *Palace Gate*,
Christmas Eve, 1919.

MY DEAREST ISABEL,

(You have given me back this letter a year after it was written, and asked me to bring it up to date. So the first three paragraphs have been put in—not as a postscript but as an antescript!)

Yes, I hear you say: "You have been telling me about Royal Commissions and the League of Nations and things like that since you went into the Lords: but what about the Law?"

It is perhaps not unnatural that after I have been eleven or twelve years at the job, you should press me to say something about my doings as a Judge. But I am not going to yield to even your importunity or to start anything of the kind. Do you not think, upon reflection, that such an exercise is unbecoming? Speaking as a lawyer, I must tell you again of the good rule, that no man can be a judge in his own cause: And as a Presbyterian I hereby solemnly declare that it is not to edification.

It is for others to appraise all that. Not even to Hansard, not even to the Statute Book must they go, but —for all these twelve years' labour—to the Law Reports!

Oh, the Law Reports, the Law Reports! Think of them, with all their Diocesan dignity, and that kind of

unctuous and reproachful decency which repels your intrusive advances. Leave them alone; they are not for the like of you. Have a look just at their backs: bucolic, splendidly housed, all full calf. How often have I been tempted to put a tablet above them inscribed with Byron's couplet from "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers":

> "Smooth, solid monuments of mental pain,
> The petrifactions of the plodding brain."

Such irreverence, I am sure! The kind of rebound after a long period of tension, into the slack of the holiday season. But I cannot keep it up. May I have a serious word with you?

The other afternoon, with a sigh of relief, for it has been a laborious term, the sittings for the year of the Judicial Committee came to an end. The two last decisions just before we rose awoke curious reflections. Not unseasonable thoughts they were, even for Christmastide. One of these cases was a conflict between a native prince and a municipality in Oudh as to the right of the latter to drive a street through a *Gunj*, or market-square, on the ground of which, beneath the fierce rays of the Indian sun, you might see the natives exposing their grain in piled-up heaps. The other was a contest between a wealthy Railway and a great Corporation, and it was, if you please, about the clearing away of snow from the tracks of a street railway in the City of Toronto! At one bound, so to speak, from the sweltering heat of India, away to another continent, to the chill and rigour of Canadian winter! And all these contentions to be laid to rest in that little room in Whitehall which you know.

Suddenly, as I felt that "the time draws near the birth

of Christ," I realized that the quiet, far-reaching task in which the Privy Council is engaged may be—must be—a part of that process, in which, through instruments ever so imperfect, the perfect scheme of peace on earth may be lifted forward in the practice and affairs of men.

Quiet, did I say? Yes: its business is the search for truth; and the stuff which it works in is justice. A grave task and austere, according so much with simplicity and quiet that there is no place there for even the paraphernalia of a Court.

Far-reaching, did I say? Yes. From that little room in Whitehall is wielded a jurisdiction over one-quarter of the population of the globe. To that little room come able, learned men, widely different in race and creed and colour, all to help in that task, fundamentally human, fundamentally divine, the search for truth, the doing of justice.

> "Yea; Truth and Justice then
> Shall down return to men."

Yes, the association of ideas—of our task with the season—is not fanciful. Rightly conceived, the supreme tribunal's authority and work must have their place in an evolution and a purpose wider than human constitutions, more lasting than human institutions, loftier than all schemes of jurisprudence or of law. Was not the Miltonic conception sound—to associate truth and justice with goodwill and peace? Over and over again there come before the Board questions, antagonisms, rivalries, jealousies, which in former times would have driven races, provinces, kingdoms, to rancorous and bloody wars. These problems are settled by the arbitrament of equity and by a justice so manifestly achieved without fear or favour,

that their solution is accepted with a loyalty at once respectful, real and complete. So that one can feel that peace is being won and kept by justice—a peace more enduring than any that could be imposed even by the rod of Imperial power.

Christmas Eve: Christmas Eve: Put up the holly.

Your affectionate Father,

SHAW OF DUNFERMLINE.

LETTER XLVI

LITERATURE AND THE LEAGUE

9, *Bolton Gardens, S.W.*5.

February 1, 1921.

MY DEAR LASS,

There was a contrast, very broad indeed, between those feelings and convictions which many of our people entertained about the South African War (1899-1900) and those which were stirred among us by the Great War of 1914-1918. Of the former I have written to you more than once; while of the latter you have felt the signification of my view about a famous dispatch of Sir Edward Grey. In the diplomatic dealings which preceded the first we did not shine: in those which preceded the second I humbly think that we did. You know my cast of mind—how I hate war, and militarism, and the tyranny of the powerful, and all the rest of it: yet what I have stated on the European War question is my sincere belief: the War was on its merits just, and on the facts a war which was unavoidable, so long as no method other than war had been devised by civilization for the restraint of an aggressor.

The crucial point for millions like myself was: How did we stand upon the broad issues raised by the pre-War diplomacy? We thought in the one case that our dear country was wrong, and in the other that it was right.

Who can tell? Our vision is too narrow. We must humbly abide in each case the questionings of conscience

and the verdict of history. As for myself, I feel that it is, of course, within the bounds of possibility that the dispassionate man may yet arise who will defend the transactions and communications of Germany, unwinding her policy and justifying her ambitions, but I gravely doubt whether such a man has yet been born.

It is not for you and me within the compass of a letter to go into these questions of deep policy. But while there was so much of contrast between the one case and the other, there was at least one point, one little spark of lightness and of happiness, that shone for us in the gloom of these terrible wars.

You know how I have always loved the highways of literature rather than its by-ways—probably because a scant leisure did not permit of the more leisured enjoyments. During these wars had not one the need and the hunger for great elementary consolations rather than for petty distractions? So it came about that during the Boer War my Elizabethan studies were broadened as I have described.

Then, when the European conflict came, one felt that one had not during one's life dealt faithfully by France, that wounded, bleeding, distracted, heroic country. And when I took to French literature again with that kind of fanciful sense of duty, I confess to you, Isabel, that I did not fully realize how solidly and nobly built was its great highway. Just as in a former period Shakespeare and Spenser had provided their unfailing springs of delight, so amidst the clamorous noise of the great events of the second vast conflict the quiet hours were brightened by Molière and uplifted by Victor Hugo. Here am I to-day, having for instance read during that War all the works of

Molière, and having gone from cover to cover of Hugo's "Les Misérables," with its forty romances, having wandered among his dramas and poems, stretching from the glorious monologues of Hernani—one of these so daring as to recall to the mind the vast structure of human order conceived by Hobbes in his "Leviathan"—from these to the idyllic sweetness of L'Enfant.

I give these only as samples from that great highway stretching on to Cherbuliez and Barbusse in our own day; but I declare to you that it sometimes crosses my mind that at least this is one of the uses of great wars, to make men take to great literatures. One need not name the list of heroes, but surely one will love France with an affection which is more durable, having walked, however imperfectly, among her great ideas led by the most gifted of her sons.

Shortly after the Armistice was declared I found these studies to be not without value, and they formed, I think, part of the link of my friendship with M. Bourgeois, the present President of the French Senate. It came about in this way. After the Armistice was declared, and when the great Conference was being held in Paris to hammer out the Treaty of Peace, I went there at the head of a deputation from the League of Nations Society. Similar deputations proceeded from other countries, and, together with our brethren in France, we held a series of meetings, our object being to get our ideas put into definite shape on a subject which was infinitely more important to the world, in our opinion, than the mere haggling over the arrangements among the victors or with the vanquished. Ostentatiously it had been declared that this was a War to end War, and we wanted to help that in very truth it

should be so. Our desire was that the Peace should not be a patch-up, but part of a recognized and permanent principle for the arbitrative settlement of disputes between all the kingdoms of the earth.

There was Utopia for you! And on that subject just let me go back a bit. For about a couple of years prior to that the League of Nations Society had dragged on with exiguous resources and in the cold shade of something worse than opposition, namely, indifference—an existence which was only brightened by the determination and energy of a small knot of enlightened men. They went from man to man looking for someone of the highest public standing who would take them by the hand, and they were not successful. It seems to-day like a dream to me, the difference between that struggling infancy and the quick and marvellous growth which has been reached within four years' time. Just consider what it is to have passed from that beginning, as I did as the President of the Society, to that Chamber in Paris where the organizing energy of M. Bourgeois and of delegates from Belgium, Italy and many countries, some as far away as Japan and India, had created an enthusiasm which was fanned into a flame by the eloquence of Viviani. We were aware that every evening as our propositions were formulated, after discussion, they were conveyed by M. Bourgeois to M. Clemenceau, and were welded into the Covenant which was then being constructed.

The Covenant was framed. The actual League of Nations came into being. And then think of that further stage only the other day, when the League of Nations met in Geneva with representatives upon it from forty-two nations of the earth. You may see, of course, anywhere

about the vast projects which came under discussion, but, as I say, it is the contrast between the slender infancy and the swift rise through an ardent youth to a strong manhood that does impress one.

What shall happen to it? Who can tell? The memory of man is short and the horrors of war pass into a kind of gilded and glorified oblivion, and the demon is not exorcised for ever. I know all that; but let us hope on. It is indeed no light task for the nations to address themselves to a programme which is no less than the adjustment of international disputes, the regulation of national ambitions, and the prevention of international crimes. The Holy Alliance failed, and all its pietistic provisions were seen to have been but a cover for the jealousies of kings. My hope is in the peoples of this world. It is they for whom a League should exist. It is for them to say whether the world is to be governed any longer by dynastic or racial ambitions or on the principle of the brotherhood of man.

Much learning in the past has led up to the present situation, and, as you know, I have written upon Grotius recently to some of the journals on this subject. But neither past learning nor past history will guide civilization far, unless all the great nations who own the name will band themselves together.

What of America? Why does she stand out? In Paris we found that our colleagues from America were heart and soul with us, but were cramped at every turn by consideration for the position of President Wilson and by the trouble of party politics on that Continent, and their Constitution seemed ever rising before them like a disturbing spectre. At a great gathering one evening I spoke

heartily in public to our American friends, saying to them what I now repeat to you, that it is right for a nation, just as it is right for a man, to pay regard to the Constitution. That makes it and him live a sober and a temperate life. But when the tables are turned and the Constitution becomes an obsession, and people are ever wondering whether they should do this or that for fear of their Constitution, then, whether it be for a nation or a man, the paths of good sense and good comradeship and good conduct may be blocked because of sheer hypochondria.

This view is, of course, open to many objections, but it may strike some sensible men as true. America, thank God! came into the War before the European nations were altogether bled white, and by her help the hæmorrhage was staunched. It is no longer a case of a bleeding world, but it is the case of a stricken, maimed and wounded world, and in the healing of those wounds and the restoration of a real peace, what we pray is that America do not stand out *until mortification has set in.*

It was from America that we learned afresh that "Man is more than Constitutions." It was from America that we learned afresh the unselfishness of true freedom, asking ourselves, with a sense of consecration, whether we who are free can—

> "With leathern hearts forget
> That we owe mankind a debt."

Do not think I speak despairingly. I speak of a thing which it is impossible for my mind to conceive—that America will turn its back upon those doctrines. With the warmth of heart of its people and with the wealth of talent in its public men, America will not be content

to find in its Constitution a paralysis which would disable it from the duties of greatness and would make Alexander Hamilton turn in his grave. No nation is strong enough to turn its ideals into a derision.

Be patient, then: be patient with the League of Nations. We hope in this: America will join up, and so will Germany. Each of those countries has the equal of a Bourgeois, or even his superior, in deep conviction, in statesmanship, in organizing talent. May the time come when in Britain, in America and in Germany there will arise a Viviani! I know that Lord Grey and Lord Robert Cecil, who have done so much for the cause, will re-echo this wish.

The cares of legal work press upon me. I have no time to say more. How comforting to think that no pain and no struggle in a good cause can ever be entirely lost! What an optimist I am!

Your loving

FATHER.

INDEX

A

" ABERDEEN Size " in hats, 88
Acland, Mr., 137
Admiralty Regulations for Shipping, 72
Advocate, becomes an, 41
  drudgery of life of, 73, 74
Agnosticism, outbreak of, 9
Alexandrina, Lord Shaw's sister, death of, 9
Alloa, Lord Shaw and Campbell-Bannerman at, 236
Alverstone, Lord Chief Justice (*see* also Webster, Sir Richard), on Presbyterian Church Dispute in " Recollections of Bar and Bench," 191
America and Great War, 313
  and League of Nations, 312-313
  world influence of, 313
" American History," by Sir George Trevelyan, 137
Americans, characteristics of, 146
Annual Synod of United Presbyterian Church, 101
Anstruther, Sir Robert, as Parliamentary candidate, 27
" Anti-burgher," Lord Shaw as, 68, 69
Apostolic succession and Presbyterianism, 99, 101
Asher, Mr., estimate of, 117, 118
  resigns Solicitor-Generalship for Scotland, 116
Asquith, Mr., 229
  and Campbell-Bannerman, 262, 263, 267, 269
  formation of Government by, 281
  succeeds Campbell-Bannerman, 280
Attorney-General for England, salary of, 279

B

BACK Benches, loyalty of men of, 114-15
Balallan, Crofters' Meeting at, 58
Balfour, Mr. Arthur J., and Carnegie's Scotch University Trust, 166
  and United Free Church, 177
  in Home Rule Debate, 111, 124
  lunches with Botha, 198, 200
  on confederation of South Africa, 200
  on South African Constitution, 198, 199
  South African war, and, 195
  Tariff Reform and, 273
  unworthy treatment of Mr. Ure by, 251
Balfour, J. B., 236
Balfour, Lord Advocate, 69
  as Lord Kinross, Lord President of the Court of Session, 83
  character of, 118
  Mr. Gladstone as guest of, 83
Balfour of Burleigh, Lord, and Carnegie's Scotch University Trust, 158, 159, 161, 170
Ballot Act, 27
Bar, Lord Shaw decides for, 30
  training for, 40
" Barnbougle," Campbell-Bannerman's name for Lord Rosebery, 268
Barrie, J. M., Lord Shaw on genius of, 110
Bartlett, Sir Ellis Ashmead, 113
" Basin of Rosyth," 6
Baxter, Richard, Mr. Gladstone on works of, 85
Baynes, Professor, Lord Shaw introduced to, 39

Belfast, July 12th in, 123
" Belmont," Author as guest at, 239
funeral of Lady Campbell-Bannerman from, 267
Bench of United Kingdom, sympathy of, for barristers, 75
Bethell, Sir Richard, Gladstone's recollections of, 90
Bible, " atmosphere " of, in Scottish homes, 16
" Biglow Papers " quoted, 193
Blackie, Professor, at Edinburgh University, 31, 32
Blair, Mr. John, and " Young Scots' Society," 211, 213
Blair, Thomas, at Rosyth, 6
Board of Trade, Mr. Lloyd George's administrative talent at, 274
Boers, popularity of, after war, 197
Bomba, King, 80
Books, availability of, to-day, 14
which influenced boyhood, 10, 15-17
Border Burghs, The, Alexander Laing Brown, member for, 106
Austen Chamberlain candidate for, 107
Conan Doyle candidate for, 260
Election for, 108-109, 119
Home Rule and, 107
Liberal staunchness of, 128
Lord Shaw accepts invitation to contest, 104
Sir George Trevelyan, member for, 105
Botha, General, Liberal dinner to, 198
Lord Roberts writes to, on reprisals, 222
Lord Shaw and, 198
Mr. Balfour, and, 198-200
prophecy on Confederation of South Africa, 200
quoted by Lord Shaw, in Chinese Labour speech, 196-7
sufferings of wife of, in war, 223
visit to England of, 197
Bourgeois, M., friendship with, 310
Boyd, Zachary, Mr. Gladstone on translation of the Scriptures by, 85, 86
Bright, John, denounces verdict in Rutherglen case, 49
mocked at, as pro-Russian, 78
British Linen Company Bank, Lord Shaw tries for a clerkship in, 22
British Quarterly Review, article by Author in, on Union with England of Scotland and Ireland, 121
British Weekly, and Carnegie's Scotch University Trust, 165
Brodrick, Mr., and trial of General Kritzinger, 205
Brougham, Lord, Gladstone on, 88
Brown, Alexander Laing, as member for Border Burghs, 106
Brown, Dr. John, " Horæ Subsicivæ " by, 140
" Rab and His Friends," by, 139
stories of, 139, 140
Bruce, Dr., 12
and United Free Church, 176
Bryce, Mr. James (Lord Bryce), and free University education, 155 *et seq.*, 161
appointment as Chief Secretary for Ireland, 264
" The Constitution of America," by, 136
Buckle, Spanish History of, 39
Bunyan, " atmosphere " of, in Scottish homes, 16
Burglary at Lord Shaw's Edinburgh house, 216 *et seq.*
Burns, John, and Chinese Labour debate, 196
Burns, Robert, as " Wizard of the Future," 143
" atmosphere " of, in Scottish homes, 16
influence of poems of, on boyhood, 15
quotations from, *a propos* of early struggles of barrister, 74
quoted, on distribution of wealth, 134
Buxton, Mr. Sydney, at dinner to Botha, 198
in opposition, 129
literary ability of, 137
Byron, Lord, quoted, 305

C

CAFÉ ROYAL, politicians' dinner party at, 266
Cairns, Lord Chancellor (Sir Hugh), Gladstone's opinion of, 89
Cairns, Principal John, and Presbyterian Union, 173
and United Free Church, 176
offered the Principalship of Edinburgh University, 102
Calderwood, Dr., Lord Shaw and, 36
Calvin, organizing genius of, 99
Campbell, Henry (*see* Campbell-Bannerman, Sir Henry)
Campbell-Bannerman, Sir Henry, adherence to principle by, 245
and Carnegie Scotch University Trust, 158, 163
and constitution for South Africa, 3, 195, 223, 241, 243
and Liberal League, 231
and military policy in South Africa, 220
and "Pilgrim's Progress," 267
and United Free Church, 177
as leader of Liberal Party, 247
as Prime Minister, 251
as public speaker, 235
authority of, 272
character of, 235, 236, 237
Chinese Labour debate, and, 196
death of, 269
elected for Dunfermline, 27
elected Leader of Liberal Party, 229
failing health of, 258, 268, 280
first parliamentary contest of, 26
formation of Ministry by, 260 *et seq.*
gift of, for reconciliation of opposites, 271
interview with, after 1905 election, 251, 261 *et seq.*
intrigue against, 261 *et seq.*
letters from, 241-3, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 259, 261, 265, 266-7, 268-9
literary tastes of, 238, 239
Campbell-Bannerman, Sir Henry, Lord and Lady Shaw as guests of, 239, 240
Lord Shaw's last interview with, 269
Lord Shaw sees, concerning Presbyterian legal proceedings, 183, 184
meets Presbyterian leaders, 175
on political ideal, 3
Campbell-Bannerman, Lady, death of, 267
Canada, Author and, 225
"Loyalist" riots in, 226
Canmore, King Malcolm, tomb of, 17
tower of, 17
Canterbury, Archbishop of, as guest of Campbell-Bannerman, 239
Carlyle, as Lord Rector of Edinburgh University, 38
Carnegie, Andrew, 27
as lover of music, 148
at Cluny Castle, 147, 151 *et seq.*
belaudings of German Emperor by, 163
character of, 144 *et seq.*
death of, 144
gift of, for free University education, 145, 156 *et seq.*, 160 *et seq.*, 166 *et seq.*
letter from, on University Trust, 161
Lord Shaw and, 144 *et seq.*, 166 *et seq.*
Carson, Sir Edward, in Home Rule Debate, 111
Catholic movement in Germany, Gladstone on, 87
"Cawnpore," by Sir George Trevelyan, 137
Cazenove, Provost Dr., discusses Tractarian Movement with Mr. Gladstone, 86, 87
Cecil, Lord Robert, and League of Nations, 314
"*Century Magazine*," 146
Chalmers, Dr. Peter, "History of Dunfermline" by, 17
Chamberlain, Mr. Austen, as candidate for Border Burghs, 107
elected for Worcestershire, 107

Chamberlain, Joseph, and Crofters' agitation, 58
and Home Rule, 107, 124
South African War, and, 195
tariff reform and, 273
Channing, Lord, and Kritzinger's trial, 207
Charlestown, changes at, 5
Chinese labour, speech on, 196
Church, affairs of, in Scotland in the 'eighties, 99
duty and responsibilities of, 67-8
Church and State, Presbyterians and, 101, 174
separation of, 70
Church Courts, 100
Churchill, Lord Randolph, Lord Shaw pairs with, 128
Churchill, Mr. Winston, at dinner at Café Royal, 266
Cicero, influence of "*pro Cluentio*" on Author, 33
Circuit Courts, young advocates and, 47
Clemenceau, League of Nations Society and, 311
Clemens, Samuel, Mr. Carnegie and, 146, 147
Cluny Castle, Mr. Carnegie at, 147, 151 *et seq.*
Coal strike (1920), 234
Combe, George, "Constitution of Man" by, 16
"Competition Wallah," by Sir George Trevelyan, 137
"Constitution of Man," by George Combe, 16
Cooper, Mr. (of *The Scotsman*), opinion regarding, 95
Mr. Gladstone's story of, 88
Cordite vote (1895), 127
Corn Law Repeal, 78
Courtney, Lady, Author meets Botha at house of, 198
Courtney, Lord, 198
on trial of Kritzinger, 206
Craigmyle Library, Dr. Ross at, 159
Criminal Cases, lack of, in Scotch Advocate's experience, 47
Criminals, Defence of, in Scotland, 47
Crofters Act, of 1886, 57
Crofters' Commissioners, report of, on conditions in Lewis, 62, 63
work of, 57

D

DALMENY, Lord Shaw at, 232
Davidson, Dr., 12
and United Free Church, 176
Deer raiders, Lewis, trial of, 57 *et seq.*
Denney, and United Free Church, 176
Derby, Lord, and Montenegrins as "half savage people," 86
Dewar, Arthur (Lord Dewar), and "Young Scots' Society," 211
Dickson, Mr. Scott, and Elgin Commission, 188
Dillon, John, 263
"Disendower" and "Disestablisher," Lord Shaw becomes a, 70
Dissent, in Scotland, 100
Dockers' Inquiry, Lord Shaw invited to preside over, 55
report of, 300 *et seq.*
scenes at, 298 *et seq.*
Dods, Marcus, 12
and United Free Church, 176
Doherty, trial and "judicial murder" of, 47-49
Dollar, academy at, 21
Döllinger, Dr., Mr. Gladstone on, 87
Doyle, Mr. Conan, as candidate for Border Burghs, 260
Dublin, Lord Shaw on Sinn Fein rebellion in, 285, 293 *et seq.*
illness in, 285, 291, 292
Dunfermline, Abbey of, 16
boyhood in, 16, 17, 18, 20
election scene in, 27-29
Elizabeth, Queen of Bohemia, born at, 17
King Charles I. born at, 17
Mr. Carnegie's boyhood at, 146
Durham, Lord, Canadian report of, 226

E

EAST OF SCOTLAND Liberal League, meeting of, in Edinburgh, 229
Lord Shaw and, 229-230
Edinburgh, difficulty of reaching from Dunfermline, 21
Lloyd George at, 274
Lord Shaw's entrance to Parliament House at, 41
Mr. Gladstone on beauties of, 84
Mr. Merriman's arrival in, 212-214
Music Hall, Gladstone's meeting in, 80 *et seq.*
Parliament House of, 252 *et seq.*
student's life in, 35, 36
Edinburgh Reviewers, Mr. Gladstone on, 88
Edinburgh University, celebrated Lord Rectors of, 38
Ghillie's success at, 154
Lord Shaw at, 31 *et seq.*
principalship of, offered to Dr. John Cairns, 102
Stevenson competitor for professorship at, 139
Education, a passion with parents, 19
"Educational Ladder," ambitions concerning, 145
Lord Shaw and, 22, 31, 128
Edward VII., King, sends for Campbell-Bannerman, 260
telegram to concerning Kritzinger, 207, 208
'Eighties, The, affairs of Scottish Church in, 99
Author's recollections of, 73 *et seq.*, 98 *et seq.*
public feeling in, 78
Election scenes in the 'sixties, 26-29
Elgin Commission, appointment of, 188
Elgin, Lord, and Carnegie's Scotch University Trust, 168, 169
leaves Colonial Office, 281
"Encyclopædia Britannica," Lord Shaw as contributor to, 39
England, "blindness of," in relation to Irish affairs, 79, 80
Essex Hall, meeting at, concerning Kritzinger's trial, 205, 206
Established Church of Scotland, 101
Ethics, appointed assistant professor of, 36
Evangelicalism in Scottish life, 140, 141
Evans, Sir Francis, 267
Evans, Sir Samuel, 72

F

FELLOWSHIP gained at Edinburgh University, 37
Fenwick, Mr., 113
Finance, in the 'eighties, 78
Follett, Sir William, Gladstone's opinion of, 89
Foreign Affairs in the 'eighties, interest of Scotland in, 78
Foreign policy in the 'eighties, 78
Forgery, defence in case of, 49-54
Foster, Sir Walter (Lord Ilkestone), at Cluny Castle, 151, 153, 154
Fowler, Sir Henry, 264
France, restoration of Christian Sabbath in, 66
Free Church of Scotland and Church and State, perplexity of, in relation to, 101
question of union and, 101
"theological princes" of, 12
Free University Education, Lord Shaw and, 155 *et seq.*
Mr. Carnegie and, 145, 148 *et seq.*, 155 *et seq.*, 160 *et seq.*
French biography, attraction of, 39
French literature, 309
French Revolution, distribution of testamentary property under, 134
influence of Plutarch on, 40
Front Bench, promotion to, 113 *et seq.*
Froude, as Lord Rector of Edinburgh University, 38

G

GENERAL Assembly of Church of Scotland, Lord Shaw at, as Solicitor-General, 69
George, Mr. Lloyd, administrative talent of, 274
and "Wee Macgreegor," 273
as sermon hearer, 272, 273
asks Author to preside at Dockers' inquiry, 55
at Café Royal dinner, 266
at dinner to Botha, 198
at Edinburgh, 274
character of, 272
Chinese Labour debate and, 196
eloquence of, 274
escape at Birmingham of, 195
Lord Shaw and, 272
Parliamentary dexterity of, 129
German Emperor, Mr. Carnegie's "belaudings" of, 163
German thought, Scottish theologians and, 12
Germany, and Britain's protest against invasion of Belgium, 277
policy of, in Belgium, compared with British in South Africa, 224
Germany's code of terror, 71
Gladstone, Mr. Herbert, 84
Gladstone, Mrs., 91
Gladstone, W. E., adulation of, by *Scotsman*, 93
and Italy, 80
admiration for, 79, 136
appearance of, 82, 84
as Lord Rector of Edinburgh University, 38
at meeting in Edinburgh Music Hall, 81
death of, 112
discusses Tractarian Movement with Dr. Cazenove, 86, 87
gestures of, 82
herculean work of, on Home Rule, 130
Home Rule debate, and, 112
introduction to, 87
Gladstone, W. E., listens to Author's maiden speech, 111
Lord Shaw's conversation with, in third Midlothian campaign, 83 *et seq.*
Midlothian campaign of, 78 *et seq.*
Morley's life of, 79
on beauties of Edinburgh, 84
on Dr. Döllinger, 87
on Lord Brougham and Scarlett, 88, 89
on Luther, 87
on Montenegrins, 86
on Père Hyacinthe, 87
on reproduction of old Scottish literature, 85
personality of, 81, 82, 90, 91
recollections of great lawyers of, 89, 90
reversal of *Scotsman's* policy concerning, 94
story of Mr. Cooper, of *Scotsman*, 88
Glasgow, defence of Doherty at, 47, 48
Glasgow University, Zachary Boyd's translation of Scriptures at, 86
Good Words, 15
Gordons, land of, 1
Goschen, Sir Edward, Sir Edward Grey's letter to, 277
Great War, aftermath of, 2, 71
literary recreations in, 309
on justice of, 308
popular feeling on, 308
Greek, a ghillie's knowledge of, 153
as a compulsory university study, 31
Grey, Sir Edward (Lord), 229
and Campbell-Bannerman, 262, 263
and Ireland, 275
great despatches of, 276, 308
influence of Rosebery on, 275
League of Nations, and, 314
letter to Sir Edward Goschen, 277
The Times and, 262
Guthrie, Dr., 15

H

HALDANE, Mr. (Lord), 229
and Campbell-Bannerman, 262, 263
and United Free Church, 177
as Secretary for War, 274, 275
Author and, 275
Haldane, Sir William, as Crown Agent for Scotland, 280
Hallam, Arthur, Gladstone as associate of, 80
Hamilton, Sir William, fellowship founded in memory of, gained by Author, 37
Harcourt, Sir William, and Liberal Imperialism, 228
as Leader of the Commons, 113
as Leader of Opposition, 130
Campbell-Bannerman on, 250
experiences at Parliamentary Bar of, 130, 131
Lord Shaw and, 130
meets Presbyterian leaders, 175
resignation of, 229
Healy, Mr. Tim, 130
Highland land question, acute feeling, over, 57
"History of Civilization," by Buckle, 10
"History of Irish Land Acts," by Barry O'Brien, 122
"History of Philosophy," by Schwegler, 37
Hobbes, "Leviathan" by, 310
Hogge, Mr., and "Young Scots' Society," 211
Home Rule, "put into cold storage," 130
Home Rule Bill, division on, 122
safety and "moderation of," 120
speech on, 111
Home Rule Parliament (1892-1895), impressions of, 110 *et seq.*
Home Rule policy, Liberal, 80
Border Burghs election on, 107
"Horæ Subsicivæ," by Dr. John Brown, 140
Horne, Sir Robert, and Docker's Inquiry, 55
Hugo, Victor, 309
Hyacinthe, Père, Mr. Gladstone on, 87

I

ILKESTONE, Lord (*see* Foster, Sir Walter)
Imperialism, Liberal, 228
Liberal militaristic, 205-6
Lord Rosebery and, 210
the true, 199
Unionist Government and, 129
Infidels, Lord Shaw accused of being an associate of, 70
Inglis, Lord President, 43
and opinions of Lord Jeffrey, 88
Inheritance, Law of, 132, 133
"Innocents Abroad," Mark Twain's story of, 147
Inns of Court, as "sweet ornaments" of English and Irish Bar, 45
Inverkeithing, changes at, 5
Ireland, effect of events in, on opinion of Gladstone's policy, 79
family interest in, 284
German rifles, etc., in, in Dublin rebellion, 296
martial law in, 296
politics of, 119
"reprisals" in, 219
Royal Commission on Importation of Arms into, 285 *et seq.*

J

JAMES, Lord, of Hereford, and United Presbyterian action, 191
Jameson raid, 130
Jessel, Gladstone's opinion of, 89
Johnston, Sir Harry, on South African War, 249
Judicial Committee of Privy Council, experiences on, 305 *et seq.*
marine problems before, 72
"Judicial Murder," participant in a, 47-49

K

KANT, 37
"Khaki" election, 244
Campbell-Bannerman on, 246
Kinnear, Dean (afterwards Lord), 43

Kinross, Lord (*see* also Balfour, Lord Advocate)
and United Presbyterian action, 191
Kitchener, Lord, at Vereeniging Conference, 202-3
Knollys, Lord, and telegram to King on Kritzinger, 207, 208
Knox, John, educational ideal of, 156
masterful intellect of, 99
Kritzinger, General, trial of, 205 *et seq.*

L

LABOUR, and "dangers of confiscation," 134
conditions and hours of, in the 'sixties, 24 *et seq.*
rights and duties of, 301-3
Land, inequality of distribution of, 57
law of inheritance and, 132, 133
Land Bill, Ireland (1895), 121
rejection of, 120
Latin, a ghillie's knowledge of, 153
teaching of, at Edinburgh University, 32, 33
"L'Avénement de Bonaparte," by Vandal, 66
Law and Jurisprudence, 304
Law, Mr. Bonar, 55
Law of Nations, and destruction of property in war, 222
and reprisals, 219
League of Nations, America and, 312
formation of, 311
future of, 312, 314
Lord Grey and, 314
Lord Robert Cecil and, 314
League of Nations Society, deputation of, to Peace Conference, 310
Lord Shaw and, 278, 311
Learmont, Mr. Thomas, recollections of Sir Walter Scott of, 141, 142
Lee, Dr. Robert, Mr. Gladstone and, 86
Leese, Sir Joseph, 112
Leibnitz, 37
"Les Miserables," 310
"Leviathan," by Hobbes, 310
Lewis, Crofters agitation on, 58
Lewis deer raiders, trial of, 57 *et seq.*
Lewis, Herbert, 129
Lewis, Sir George Cornewall, "on the Government of Dependencies," 39
Liberal Government (1895) defeat of, 127
Liberal Imperialism, 129
Liberal League, Campbell-Bannerman and, 231, 249
formation of, 210, 229
meeting of East of Scotland, 229
Mr. Morley and, 231
Liberal Party, disruption of, 245
under Campbell-Bannerman's leadership, 247-8
Liberalism and South African war, 199 *et seq.*
"Life of Cobden," by John Morley, 137
"Life of Gladstone," by Lord Morley, 79
"Life of Lord Courtney," by Mr. Gooch, 206
"Life of Macaulay," by Sir George Trevelyan, 137
Limekilns, changes at, 5
Lindley, Lord, judgment of, on Free Church action, 181, 191
Lindsay, Dr., 12
and United Free Church, 176
Literature, Author's "true delights" in, 44, 309
"Literature of Knowledge," 15
Local Government Bill for Scotland, 119
Loch Laggan, Lord Shaw and ghillie on, 151 *et seq.*
London, power of Press in, 93
Long, Mr. Walter, and Royal Commission on Importation of Arms into Ireland, 285
Lord Advocate, appointed as, 263, 265, 279, 281
increased salary of, 125
salary of, 279
Lord of Appeal, Scotch, appointment as, 281
Lords, House of, application of judgment of, in Free Church action, 182

Lords, House of, judgment of, on Free Church action, 181
Lord Shaw on judgment of, 187
maiden speech in, 111
results of judgment of, on Free Church action, 185, 186
war-time shipping problems and, 72
widespread uneasiness concerning judgment of, 190
Louis Philippe, and Testamentary Law, 133
Lowell, James Russell, "Biglow Papers," quoted, 193
"Lucknow," recollections of, 6
Luther, Mr. Gladstone on, 87

M

MacDermott, The, 121
Mackarness, Mr., and dinner to Botha, 198
Macleod, Dr. Norman, 15
MacNaghten, Lord, judgment of, on Free Church action, 181, 191
Macnamara, Dr., in opposition, 129
MacPherson, Hector, and "Young Scots' Society," 210
Macrae, Donald, leader of Lewis deer raid, 59
trial and defence of, 59 *et seq.*
"Mansie Waugh," humour of, 16
Martial law, speech on, 296-7
Massingham, Mr., at dinner to Botha, 198
Masson, Professor, character and influence of, 34, 35
introduces Lord Shaw to Professor Baynes, 39
Mathieson estate, Lewis, 58
Crofters Commission report on, 62, 63
Maxwell, Sir William Stirling, as Lord Rector of Edinburgh University, 38
prize offered by, 38
May, Sir Erskine, 90
McCormick, Sir William, as Secretary of Scotch University Trust, 169
McDonald, Miners' Leader, 24
McDowall of Alloa, on those "worse than infidels," 70
McGhie, Mr., 113
McKechnie, first meeting with, 43
sending for, 43, 44
McKenna, Mr. Reginald, 129, 266
McLaren, Lord, 96
McPhail, Sheriff, and trial of Lewis deer raiders, 60, 61
Mellor, Mr. (Chairman of Committee), 112
Melville, Andrew, and King's prerogative, 68
Merriman, Mr., at Edinburgh, 211 *et seq.*
Middle Temple, General Smuts as student of, 201; elected Honorary Bencher of, 202
Honorary Bencher of, 201
Midlothian campaign, 77 *et seq.*
Militarism, and South African War, 204
Liberals and, 205, 228
Tory party at mercy of, 245
Mill, John Stuart, "Examination of Hamilton's Philosophy," by, 37
Miller, Hugh, influence of death of, 12
"My Schools and Schoolmasters," by, 9
suicide of, 9
"The Testimony of the Rocks," 9
Milner, Lord, at Vereeniging Conference, 202
on South African Constitution, 198, 199
Milton, on fame, 74
on Sir Harry Vane, 69
Miners, meetings of, 24
"Mines Regulations Acts," 25
Mine-sweepers, "one of the glories of the war," 71
Mirabeau, on Testamentary Law, 133
Molière, 309
Montenegrins, Mr. Gladstone on, 86
Moray Firth, mine-sweepers of, 71
Morley, Lord, and Liberal League, 231
and Lord Shaw, 119, 120, 189, 233
as editor of "The Fortnightly," 136
at Cluny Castle, 151, 153

Morley, Lord, Author's estimate of, 79
Campbell-Bannerman's Ministry and, 263
Chinese Labour Debate and, 196
great despatches of, at India Office of, 276
letter to *Times* by, on South African reprisals, 222
"Life of Cobden," by, 137
"Life of Gladstone," by, 79
meets Presbyterian leaders, 175
Mr. Carnegie and, 161
Morrison, Thomas, ex-chartist, 27
prophecy of, concerning Campbell-Bannerman, 27
Murray, Graham, 125
and Elgin Commission, 188

N

NAPOLEON and distribution of testamentary property, 134
Neaves, Lord, and "Judicial Murder," 48
Nelson, Mr. Gladstone and, 84, 85
Newman, Cardinal, Professor Rainy on, 176
Newspapers, influence of, on Author, 92
Nicoll, Sir William Robertson, and Carnegie's Scotch University Trust, 164, 165
Nineteenth Century, article in, on "The Durham Road to Peace," 225
article in, on "The Educational Peace of Scotland," 156, 161
Mr. Carnegie and, 156, 157

O

O'BRIEN, BARRY, "History of the Irish Land Acts," 122
Ochil Hills, 1, 22
O'Connor, Mr. T. P., 121, 263
Opposition, in Parliament of 1895, characteristics of, 119
line taken by Author in, 127, 128, 135
Orr, Dr., 12
and United Free Church, 176

P

PARIS, visit for League of Nations to, 310
Park, Mungo, influence of "Travels" of, on boyhood, 15
Parliament House, Edinburgh, entrance to, 41
experiences in, 252 *et seq.*
recollections of, 42 *et seq.*
Parliamentary Bar, Sir William Harcourt's experiences at, 130, 131
Paton, Mr. Forester, 236
Peace Conference, deputation to, 310
Peel, Mr. Speaker, and Lord Shaw, 124, 125
Petition of Right, discussion of procedure of, in Home Rule Parliament, 111
discussion in Home Rule debate, 112
Philosophy, influence of, on Author, 37, 44
Pittencrieff, Glen of, 17
Plato, influence of, on Author, 37
Plunkett, Sir Horace, 294
Plutarch, influence of, on French Revolution, 40
Pope, Mr., Sir William Harcourt and, 131-132
Presbyterian, Lord Shaw as, 68, 69, 100
Presbyterian Free Church, connexion of Church and State and, 174
differences in, 176
Elgin Commission appointed, 188
judgment on action of, 181
minority of, issues summons, 179
minority of, refuses arbitration 185
mission work of, 185
Principal Rainy and, 174
"sacred responsibilities" of minority of, 184
strength of minority in, 185
sustentation fund of, 186
union of, with United Presbyterian Church, 176
Presbyterianism, and connexion with secular power, 101

Presbyterianism, influence of, in Scotland, 99-100
State endowments and, 102
Press, and Merriman's visit to Edinburgh, 216
and Scotch University Trust, 164
influence of, 92, 93
Scottish objection to domination of, 93, 94
Press-copying, as an innovation, 26
Primogeniture, Lord Shaw's Bill relative to, 133
Privy Council, Judicial Committee of, 305 *et seq.*
war-time shipping problems and, 72
"Puddenhead Wilson," Carnegie's talk compended in, 147

R

"RADICAL Pro-Boer School," 274
Railway strike, threat of, in 1920, 234
Rainy, Principal Robert, 12
and Presbyterian Free Church, 174
and United Free Church, 181
character of, 172
letters from, on Presbyterian law case, 183, 189, 190
on Cardinal Newman, 176
on *The Scotsman*, 95
Reay, Lord, as Trustee of Carnegie's Scotch University Trust, 158, 163
"Recollections of Bar and Bench," by Lord Alverstone, 191
Redmond, John, 121, 263
Lord Shaw and, 122, 123
Redmond, William, 122
Reform Act (1867), 27
Reits, Mr. F. W., power of despatches of, 276
Religion, influence of, on Scottish character, 11
"Reprisals," in Ireland, 219
in South Africa, 221
Law of Nations and, 219
results of, in South Africa, 223
Rigby, Lord, "ponderousness" of, 111
Ripon, Lord, 264
Roberts, Lord, and annexation of South African Republics, 223
letter to Botha on reprisals, 222
proclamations of, in South Africa, 220, 221, 222
Robertson, Lord, and Free Church case, 191
death of, 281
Robson, Mr., 129
Rosebery, Lord, 125, 126, 232
and Mirabeau, 232
and United Free Church, 177
as Prime Minister, 113
Campbell-Bannerman's nickname for, 268
"high literary gifts of," 136
influence of, on Sir Edward Grey, 275
Liberal Imperialism and, 210
Lord Courtney's appeal to, concerning Kritzinger, 206
meeting of East of Scotland Liberal League, and, 229
resignation of, 229
withdrawal from public affairs of, 231
Ross, Dr. (Sir John Ross), and Carnegie's Scotch University Trust, 157, 159, 161, 163, 164, 165, 166 *et seq.*
Rosyth, boyhood at, 6
changes at, 5 *et seq.*
Round Table Conference, 107
Royal Commission on Importation of arms into Ireland, Lord Shaw as president of, 285 *et seq.*
report of, 285 *et seq.*
Russell, George, 137
Russell, Sir Charles (Lord Chief Justice), 112
Rutherglen case, 47-49

S

SABBATH Day (*see* also Sunday), novel-reading on, in Scottish homes, 15
observance of, 65 *et seq.*

Sabbath Day, restoration by France of Christian, 66
Sadowa, Lord Shaw's recollections of, 7
St. Magnus Cathedral, Sir W. Scott and 255
St. Nicholas, 146
Sampson, Mr. George, 12, 13
Sauer, Mr., and "Young Scots' Society," 211
Scarlett, Mr. Gladstone on, 88, 89
Scheepers, death of, 204, 206
Schwegler, "History of Philosophy" by, 37
Scotch Education Act, 1872, 20
Scotch Grand Committee, as a "battlefield," 119
increased salaries for Scottish Law Officers and, 125
Scotch University Trust, Mr. Carnegie's, appointment of Trustees for, 158 *et seq.*
development of, 160 *et seq.*, 166 *et seq.*
Dr. Ross as treasurer of, 170
Press and, 164
Sir W. McCormick as secretary of, 169
Sir W. Robertson Nicoll and, 164, 165
story of origin of, 148 *et seq.*
Scotland, Bill on Law of Succession in, 133
dissent in, 100
Established Church in, 101
evangelicalism in, 140, 141
Free University education in, and Mr. Carnegie, 145, 148 *et seq.*, 155 *et seq.*, 160 *et seq.*
independence of journalistic leading strings in, 93
interest in views of Adam Smith in, 78
power of testacy in, 133
Presbyterianism and, 99, 100
public affairs in the 'eighties in, 77, 78
"sagging" of Liberalism in, 210
solidarity of belief in, 100
Scotsman, The, "adulation" of Gladstone by, 93
Scotsman, The, Lord Shaw and, 95, 96
reversal of policy of, concerning Gladstone, 94
Scott, Mr. Hope, Sir William Harcourt and, 131-2
Scott, Sir Walter, as sheriff, 141
as "Wizard of the Past," 143
citation of "The Pirate," 255
stories of, 141, 142
Scottish literature, Mr. Gladstone on reproduction of old, 85
Sebastopol, recollections of, 7
Seely, Captain, 266
Sellar, Professor, at Edinburgh University, 32, 33
Sexton, Mr., 121, 124
Shakespeare, 15, 225, 309
Professor Masson's lectures on, 34
quoted, 227
Shand, Lord, judgment of, on Free Church action, 181, 191
Shaw, Alexander (son of Lord Shaw), 63, 64, 259
Shaw, Mr. (Author's father), death of, 8, 19
Shaw, Mrs. (Author's mother), recollections of, 8-10, 20, 22, 148, 149
"Shaw's Million," Mr. Carnegie and, 161
Simpson, Sir Walter, tour of, with R. L. Stevenson, 138
Sinn Fein Rebellion, Lord Shaw and, 285, 293 *et seq.*
Skibo, Mr. Carnegie and, 146
Slaves, emancipation of, influence of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" on, 16
Smith, Adam, and United Free Church, 176
interest in views of, in Scottish homes, 78
"Wealth of Nations," by, 16, 38
Smith, Principal Sir G. Adam, 12
Smith, Robertson, 12
and United Free Church, 176
Smith, Sydney, on Ireland, 122, 123
Smuts, General, and South African Constitution, 199
as constitutional lawyer, 201

Smuts, General, as student of Middle Temple, 201
character of, 2
death of infant child of, in Concentration Camp, 223
letter on aftermath of Great War, 2
on conference at Vereeniging, 201
Solicitor-General for Scotland, appointment as, 69, 116, 136
increased salary of, 125
resignation of Mr. Asher as, 116, 117
Solicitor's office, work in, 22-3, 25-9, 30
South Africa, annexation of Republics of, 224
Constitution for, granted by Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman, 3, 195; Mr. Balfour on, 198; Lord Milner on, 198, 199
Lord Roberts's proclamation in, 220-1
on military policy in, 220
results of reprisals in, 223
South African Confederation, Botha's prophecy on, 200
South African war, disillusionment over, 273
militarists and, 205
outbreak of, 194
popular feelings on, 308
Spencer, "Bobby," and Author, 125
Spencer, Lord, 121
Spenser, Edmund, reading of, 225, 309
State Endowments, Presbyterianism and, 101
Stevenson, Robert Louis, as competitor for Professorship of Constitutional History, 139
"Catriona," by, 139
"Kidnapped," by, 139
recollections of, 137, 138
Sir Walter Simpson's tour with, 138, 139
"Virginibus Puerisque," by, 139
Stirling Burghs, Lord Shaw and Campbell-Bannerman in, 235
Strachan, and trial of Lewis deer raiders, 60
Strikes, colliers' and railway, 234
Students' life in Edinburgh, 35, 36
Submarines, German, action of, 71
Sunday, as Day of Rest, 65-67
"story factory," 46
Sunday at Home, 15
Sutherland, Tom, 233
Synod, composition of, 100, 173
quality of debates in, 101, 102

T

TARIFF REFORM, Unionists and, 273
Temple, Sir Richard, congratulates the Solicitor-General for Scotland (Lord Shaw), 69
Tennyson, "In Memoriam," 80
Lord Shaw quotes "Pagan England" of, in Lewis deer raiders' trial, 62
quoted, 10, 227
Testacy, Power of, in Scotland, 133
"The Constitution of America," by Mr. Bryce, 136
"The Durham Road to Peace," article by Lord Shaw on, in *Nineteenth Century*, 225
"The Educational Peace of Scotland," article in *Nineteenth Century*, by Lord Shaw, 156
Mr. Carnegie and, 156, 157, 161
"The Pilgrim's Progress," influence of, on Lord Shaw's boyhood, 10, 11
"The Scots Worthies," influence of, on Lord Shaw's boyhood, 10
"The Testimony of the Rocks," by Hugh Miller, 9
Thoms case, Lord Shaw and, 253 *et seq.*
Times, The, and intrigue against Campbell-Bannerman, 262 *et seq.*
Tiree, Crofters' agitation on, 58
Tractarian Movement, discussed by Mr. Gladstone with Dr. Cazenove, 86, 87
Trevelyan, Sir George, "American History," by, 137
as member for Border Burghs, 105
"Cawnpore," by, 137
"Competition Wallah," by, 137
letter to Author from, 105
"Life of Macaulay," by, 137
secession of, on Home Rule, 107

U

ULSTER, and importation of arms, 286-88
"Uncle Tom's Cabin," emancipation of slaves and, 16
influence of, on boyhood, 16
United Free Church, action by Free Church against, 179 *et seq.*
as "Free Democracy," 177
campaign on judgment against, 184, 187
Elgin Commission appointed, 188
first General Assembly of, 177
formation of, 176
judgment on Free Church action against, 181
legal proceedings of, 182 *et seq.*
United Presbyterian Church, and judgment on Free Church action, 181
member of, 68, 172
principles of, 172
union with Presbyterian Free Church, 176
Ure, Mr., as Solicitor-General for Scotland, 280
defence of, in House of Commons, 251

V

VANDAL, on Sabbath in "L'Avénement de Bonaparte," 66
Vane, Sir Harry, Milton on, 69
Vereeniging Conference, 202, 203
Vergniaud, Girondist leader, admiration for, 39
"Virginibus Puerisque," admiration for, 139
Viviani, M., and League of Nations, 311, 314

W

WALLACE, Dr., in opposition, 128
Waverley Market, Edinburgh, United Free Church meeting at, 179
United Presbyterian meeting at, 176
"Young Scots' Society's" meeting at, 211 *et seq.*
"Wealth of Nations," by Adam Smith, 16
Webster, Sir Richard (*see also* Alverstone, Lord), 465
at Cluny Castle, 151
"Wee Macgreegor," Lloyd George and, 273
Week-ending, habit of, 66
Westbury, Lord, Gladstone's opinion of, 89
Westminster, changes in, 114
Whyte, Dr., 272
Wilson, H. J., and Kritzinger's trial, 207
Wilson, President, and League of Nations, 312
Wodrow's History, 10
Women, political power of, 134
Wyndham, Mr. George, as Chief Secretary for Ireland, 120

Y

YOUNG, Lord, as judge in forgery case, 50-54
"Young Scots' Society," formation of, 210-11

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